University of Alberta

*The American Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History in Material Queer Culture*

by

*Heather Tapley*

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The American Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History in Material Queer Culture submitted by Heather Tapley in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy..

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**Abstract**

*The American Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History in Material Queer Culture* redeploys queer as temporal practices of non-productive expenditure and, in the process, locates what I term the hobo-sexual at the juncture of nineteenth-century discursive productions of labor and sexuality. I develop the hobo-sexual, in other words, at the intersection of both not-for-profit sex and work practices, or at the crossroads of a queer materialism. Influenced by both feminist materialism and poststructuralism, my formulation of the hobo-sexual extends the recurrent metaphor of the nomad in French poststructuralist theory—a metaphor that promotes anti-Oedipal desire as resistant to capitalist grand narratives that value fixity—but, as well, my project charts the material consequences of such practices of desire and resistance. In mapping the hobo-sexual in American literature and culture, I enable a connective history of *classed* queer practice, rather than one based solely on identity politics.

My research shows a prevalence of transient sexual practice, both heterosexual and homosexual, among American hobos of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Yet these same sexual practices are consistently eclipsed in social and medical discourses by a national emphasis on reforming the hobo's pathological desire to wander, as opposed to remaining fixed, in employment. My work on the hobo-sexual foregrounds the hobo's agency and transience in sex and work, both of which, in bourgeois discourse, have been dismissed as simply degenerative. The hobo-sexual, likewise, disrupts

assumptive discourses of the American hobo as white and male. I argue that the carceral continuum of Jim Crow disciplined much of the African-American male laborer's transience and agency, while the term prostitute obscured the hobo lifestyle of sisters of the road. Employing the hobo-sexual as a connective figure in material queer culture, I argue that such twentieth-century American writers as Audre Lorde, Sarah Schulman and Eileen Myles produce hobo-sexual characters that challenge and, therefore, expose the misogyny, homophobia and racism historically used to buttress the homo-social thematic in dominant national discourse. The end result is a *classed* queer extension of American, feminist, lesbian/gay and hobo history.

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## Introduction

According to my mother, I have always taken the more difficult path in life. My choice to study American literature in Canada only reinforced this declaration. And while I have been tempted to resort to Robert Frost's lines about *the road less travelled* and how *that has made all the difference* in retaliation, I refrain because I know my mother's statement speaks to her concern regarding my financial security *down the road*—a concern I now happen to share with her.

The following dissertation, however, speaks to my choices despite these financial concerns. *The American Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History in Material Queer Culture* was imagined at a time when I thrived on a surplus income bestowed upon me by the good people who work for financial institutions in tandem with the U.S. government. Quite frankly, having money in the bank, combined with an exposure to theoretical material, allowed me an intellectual mobility to experiment with and imagine American literature and culture differently than I had previously. My concern was to write a dissertation that mattered to me as opposed to one that would speak to English department curricula at various colleges and universities. In other words, I dwelled in a romanticized and rebellious version of the Ph.D. program—a version that dismissed the job, the career and the financial payback as simply stuff I would have to deal with *down the road*.

In hindsight, then, it makes complete sense that the following pages consist predominantly of my appropriation of the mythology of the American hobo—the lone traveler who traversed the American landscape during the

nineteenth-century, who *lived deliberately* as Henry David Thoreau claims he did in *Walden*, concerned with the immediate as opposed to the future. And, according to my mother's claim regarding my history of choices, it makes even more sense that I would complicate such a mythology by way of queer—a term characterized by its "definitional indeterminacy" (Jagose 1) or instability in meaning. The hobo-sexual, after all, represents a rearticulation of the American hobo at the intersection of queer work and sex practices.

**Queer as Practice**

The term queer has been employed in various ways and, as a result of its elasticity in meaning, has come under criticism. Queer, for instance, has been contested primarily by those who understand it as a poststructural discursive construction that erases identity formations and their material histories.[1] Yet queer has also been reappropriated as "an umbrella term for a coalition of culturally marginal sexual self-identifications" (Jagose 1). According to Annamarie Jagose, "broadly speaking, queer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatize incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire" (3), which is why its use has flourished in gay and lesbian studies, as does its contestation, located in queer's seeming inability to account for the emphasis on difference signified by identity.

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[1] Jagose specifically cites Susan J. Wolfe and Julia Penelope and their argument that queer is yet another poststructural plot that privileges "patriarchal discourse" over lesbian identity (101). Jagose also outlines these same concerns by Bonnie Zimmerman and Terry Castle who likewise read the emergence of queer as a threat to lesbian identity. According to Castle, for instance, "it has recently become popular to contest, along deconstructionist lines, the very meaningfulness of terms such as *lesbian* or *gay* or *coming out*" (102).

To make the assumption that queer discounts the material effects of identified difference, however, is a reductive understanding of the term. Granted, queer does destablize and denaturalize identity; as a poststructural device it ruptures the myth of "coherent, unified, and self-determining subjects" by reconceptualizing identity as an "effect" of the "representational codes" available (Jagose 78). But, in doing so, queer also makes room for differences within identity politics. Rosemary Hennessy, for instance, speaks of queer as "'an effort to unpack the monolithic identities 'lesbian' and 'gay', including the intricate ways lesbian and gay sexualities are inflected by heterosexuality, race, gender, and ethnicity'" while Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes queer's ability to add "'leverage'" to a "'new kind of justice'" for "'the fractal intricacies of language, skin, migration, state'" (qtd. in Jagose 7). And Donald Morton insists on an understanding of queer in relation to class.

Editor of *The Material Queer: A LesBiGay Cultural Studies Reader*, Morton argues that more scholarship needs to be produced that takes as its scope "how [the] pursuit of desire relates to the problems of class, the division of labor, and the exploitation produced by surplus value" (xiv)— scholarship that "situates queer desire along the axis of class" (xiii). He calls for the co-existence of queer and materialism, a production of discourses that understands one by way of the other—scholarship that reveals the relations between queer desire and class, including a critical approach to modes of production that manufacture and maintain such marketable identities and class structures.

Morton's dialectic insists on reading queer desire as a site of dense power relations in that its historical moments of celebratory status are actually dependent upon, as well as produce, the commodification of sexual identities. He points out that, rather than queer desire being denotatively altered as valuable within cultural discourse, it is instead tolerated, but only when perceived as a marketable identity. Queer desire, in the context of capitalism and Morton's critique, is understood as far less ephemeral, radical and fluid than it is a reified identity-commodity, or the commodity fetish with exposed mystical features. What Morton accomplishes is a reading of queer *desire* as capitalist *need*, queer desire as a marketable identity that perpetuates surplus value and, therefore, capitalism, exploitation, and the division of labor. The homosexual consumer meets the need of capitalism on the market, but the desire of queers remains socially and culturally void of cultural capital, only tolerated for profit.

My understanding of Queer Materialism follows Morton's lead. In this project I will map how, historically, queer desire has been managed to contribute to American capitalist needs, that capitalism, itself, produces incongruous discourses about sexuality and labor that shift in order to maintain surplus value, as well as a deodorized American national mythology. My approach, however, differs from Morton's in at least two specific ways. My mapping of queer is neither necessarily middle-class (the homosexual model consumer), nor is it limited to what Morton's text refers to as the *LesBiGay*. Instead, I am influenced by poststructuralist thinkers, such as Judith Butler, who suggests that queer must

be "always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding politics" (*Bodies that Matter* 228).[2]

My own use of queer maintains an emphasis on locating and exposing the incongruous in productions of compulsory heterosexuality as the original sexuality and, as well, "focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire" (Jagose 1) as does most queer scholarship. But, additionally, I redeploy queer as temporal not-for-profit practices. In essence, my contestation with queer is its popular use as a canopy term for lesbigay identity,[3] particularly its usage in furthering surplus value.[4] I locate queer in what Georges Bataille refers to as

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[2] See also David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (1990); Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects" in *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (1994); and Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "What Does Queer Theory Teach Us About X?" in *PMLA* (1995). Halperin claims that if queer stablizes as a discipline, it will no longer be queer; Butler notes, likewise, that the normalization of queer would be "its sad finish" (21); and Berlant and Warner suggest that any attempt to actually summarize queer would be "violently partial" (344).

[3] Jagose speaks of queer as having emerged as a new political identity during the AIDS crisis—a time when both AIDS and the homophobia that followed necessitated new forms of political organization. She specifically lists "the shift—effected by safe-sex education—in emphasising sexual practice over sexual identities" as one of "the multidirectional pressures" which the AIDS crisis placed on "categories of identification" (94). My redeployment of queer actually accentuates this emphasis on practice as opposed to identity. Rather, my target when referring to queer employed as a collecting device is the more popular employment of queer as synonymous with gay, lesbian, bi and trans identities only.

[4] Here I refer to the use of queer in popular culture. *Queer as Folk*, for instance, consists of an evening drama with high ratings that highlights gay and lesbian friends in Pittsburgh. Each episode includes at least one sexual liaison between gay men and, to the dismay of lesbian viewers, only an occasional sex scene between the two lesbian characters usually considered less central to the show. Despite the Hollywood injection of the really beautiful boys that the original British versions do not contain, I actually enjoy watching *Queer as Folk* for an ego-ideal identification with Brian—who is out at work and who refuses to commit to any relationship, including that between himself and the gay community. (I should add he is also financially secure; lives in the most fabulous loft; has a recurrent intergenerational affair; and drives a sexy black jeep.) While I obviously live vicariously through Brian, the producers of *Queer as Folk* state in an interview on the first year CD box set that Michael—the character in search of a permanent relationship that promises love—is the most popular of the series' main roles. The producers add, however, that the profile of the primary consumer of *Queer as Folk* is actually heterosexual women. My main point here is that queer functions as an umbrella term for lesbian and gay identity in this popular production. The term queer is used to signal homosexual content as opposed to troubling the dominant discourses that produce such sexualities in the first place. Likewise, while I applaud the distribution of sex scenes, the homosexual characters performing such do not reflect many differences within homosexual aggregates. All the main characters are white, male, buff and have little difficulty in finding steady employment. And, of course, the

"non-productive expenditure" ("Notion" 116). According to Bataille, the right to consume, conserve, and acquire is deemed appropriate behavior, but the right to expend without a profitable goal is rarely considered a suitable practice within spaces deemed civilized.[5] I insist, like Morton, on a queer materialism, but one that accentuates practice as opposed to identity. Like Butler, I agree that identity signs have the potential to colonize. Butler argues that, by identifying as lesbian at a conference, she becomes colonized by way of what her audience actually considers lesbian to mean. Due to multiple discourses of knowledge that are out of her control, have predated her identification, and even those she cannot even anticipate, she is denied full management of meaning with regard to the identity sign. Butler insists, then, on an understanding of the flexibility of language and the lack of control the identity sign has in determining its own definition, regardless of the addressee or the addresser. She argues, therefore, for signs to be reunderstood for their provisionality rather than for a reliance on their essentialism. I extend Butler's argument in my redeployment of queer. Rather than the property of lesbigay identity, queer, when deemed temporal practices of nonproductive expenditure, is released from the heterosexual-homosexual binary.

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lesbian characters represent the standard butch-femme combination, have settled down and have a child.

[5] There are problems with Bataille's outlining of nonproductive expenditure in "The Notion of Expenditure" for this project. In his use of "potlatch" as a practice of "non-productive expenditure," Bataille emphasizes "the spectacular destruction of wealth" of a Tlingit chief who slashes "the throats of his own slaves." This "gift" is 'repaid' by his rival in the form of "the slaughter of a greater number of slaves." Bataille, then, does not emphasize slavery as a form of colonization but, instead, redirects his audience to read "the power to lose . . . acquired by a rich man" as his "desire to destroy" (121-123). My use of Bataille's nonproductive expenditure, however, is located in the history of the hobo-sexual who practices nonproductive expenditure from within a site of loss. In Volume 1 of *The Accursed Share*, Bataille discusses the notion that when potlatch is given by the rich it is not necessarily a pure gift of nonreciprocity, as the giver receives "rank." Instead, "the true luxury and the real potlatch" belong to "the poverty stricken, that is, to the individual who lies down and scoffs" (76).

In other words, I employ queer as "a flexible space" for "non- (anti-, contra-) straight cultural production," including "'*straight* queerness'" (Jagose 97 emphasis added).[6]

Morton locates queer materialism at the intersection of class and sexual identity; I make use of Butler's argument, however, with regard to the identity sign as a potential colonizing discourse and, therefore, make my queer

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[6] Obvious to Gayle Rubin in "Thinking Sex" is the fact that all heterosexual practice is not normative, nor is it valued. Under absolutely *bad sex*, for instance, she lists the identities of transsexuals and transvestites, and also included are fetishists, sadomasochists, sex consumers, and cross-generational sexual practitioners. Listed, in other words, under bad and unvaluable sex—those practices farthest from the line that determines value—are practices that are assigned to neither identity, homosexual nor heterosexual. They are, instead, deemed unvaluable as resistant practices; the emphasis is not on binarized identities. It is not necessary that one who is a transvestite or a fetishist or a sex consumer be either male, female, straight, or gay. The practice itself is what is deemed unvaluable. Only by extension the one who practices such acts is as well. So, too, it is because of these practices being assigned the bad sex label that the other practices associated with "long-term, stable lesbian and gay male couples," lesbians located specifically "in the bar" environment, and even gay men at the baths or parks can be located in what Rubin refers to as the "major area of contest," or in other words a place that, while still located under the label of bad sex, is also closer in proximity to good sex in the value hierarchy. Of course, the homosexual and heterosexual practices located here, immediately on the other side of the line that determines good and bad sex–this area of contest–consist predominantly, with the few exceptions being masturbation and promiscuous heterosexuality, of the homosexual in a more contained type of practice. For instance, the remainder of those listed in Rubin's diagram are "unmarried heterosexual *couples*, *stable* lesbian and gay male *couples*, lesbians *in the bar*" (emphasis added). And while promiscuous heterosexuals are apparently able to wander at will, "promiscuous gay men" must be located, apparently, "at the baths or in the park." What is interesting about most of these contested areas of practice is that they, first, unlike the completely bad sex that follows them in the hierarchy, are labelled homosexual and heterosexual. They are contained in the language of sexual difference. So, too, the homosexual practices are relegated, with the one exception of the park, to the business sector of bars and baths. Also, the emphasis on long-term, stable couples implies shared living arrangements, as well as sexual practices behind closed doors of the private abode. Implied as well in the adjective *stable* is the capitalist concept of private property, or the owning of such an abode. In essence, then, these practices within Rubin's mapping of the area of contestation, unlike the sexual practices outlined under absolutely bad sex, are hinged to consumerism, not unlike Morton's lesbigay subjects who satisfy the needs of capitalism without ever changing the terms of their denotatively understood sexual practices. What I find most crucial in Rubin's mapping of good, contested, and bad sex, in other words, is that 1.) unlike those listed in the category of completely bad sex, most of those listed in the area of contestation are divided and labelled as heterosexual and homosexual, 2.) that the homosexuals listed are predominantly assigned to place and 3.) those places—the home, the bar, the baths—are not only representative of ghettoized places that prevent the public at large from seeing the practice of homosexuality, but these places are also hinged to capitalist consumerism and profit. In essence, the lesbian and the gay man, as long as they are monogamous and maintain a place within the public closet or private abode of consensual exchange, appear to be "inching across" the line (282) into a certain space of acceptability (282).

intervention at the intersection of class and sexual practice rather than class and sexual identity. My intention is to locate the queer *in* identity, however, not to employ a binarized logic that situates queer opposite identity politics. In locating queer in practice as opposed to identity, though, I accentuate the temporality of queer and, in turn, challenge its use as a fixed identity sign. In essence, my redeployment of queer argues that identification with the signs of gay, lesbian, and/or bi does not necessitate queer. Instead, queer as practices of nonproductive expenditure necessitates an emphasis on the temporary; as practice, in other words, queer cannot be sustained. Not-for-profit practices—practices during which the objective is not gain—are interrupted by, as well as dialectically engaged with, objectives for sustenance that must be met. The pursuit of food, water and stimulation, for instance, is required to maintain the queer practices of nonproductive expenditure. The objective involved in consuming sustenance is to maintain mobility in practice; it is, therefore, a means to an end as opposed to queer practice—an end in itself.

In this respect I locate queer practice in what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari theorize as the "molecular unconscious" and identity formation in what they deem "molar aggregates" (137). It is first crucial to note that Deleuze and Guattari resignify desire as that which "does not take as its object person or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses, the vibrations and flows of every sort to which it is joined, introducing therein breaks and captures—an always nomadic and migrant desire" (141). Desire, for Deleuze and Guattari, then, consists of a perpetual kinetics of unorganized partial objects that connect in

various and temporal combinations at the molecular level; at the molar level, however, these partial objects are arrested, organized and "engineered" (137) into a "molar functionalism" that "is false" (139). While the molecular represents "desiring machines," consisting of "formative machines, whose very misfirings are functional" and are "engaged in their own assembly" by processes of dispersion that speak to only "temporalization, fragmented formations, and detached parts" (138), the "molar machines" represent desire organized by "determinate conditions" in the form of "organic, technical, or social machines" (139). As opposed to homosexual or LesBiGay identity, for instance, that is always-already hinged to a history of psycho-sexological discursive productions that depend upon the difference between the sexes, queer desire as practice "knows nothing of castration, because partial objects lack nothing" and, therefore, can form more spontaneous and temporal "multiplicities" of desire (143).

My mapping of the intersection of queer sex and work practices accentuates both the temporality and partiality of which Deleuze and Guattari speak. In appropriating queer from its formation as a synonym for gay, lesbian, and bi identity, I rearticulate queer as practices that resist the *determinate conditions* inherent in dominant discourses of knowledge that value compulsory heterosexuality and a capitalist work ethic. Hobo-sexual practice consists of multiple, spontaneous and temporal connections that resist molar formations. While I am influenced by Delueze and Guattari's theorization of molecular desire, however, I relocate their molecular machines in the conscious. In this respect, hobo-sexual practices consist of those of a *conscientious objecting to* dominant

discourses that manage sex and labor. I acknowledge, as well, that molecular desire must rest, so to speak, in molar systems, or within ideology. As Louis Althusser has noted, the production of subjectivity is located in ideology. Individuals are interpellated, or hailed, by discourse and, are, in turn, produced as ideological subjects.

In employing Deleuze and Guattari's mapping of desire at the molecular level—these "non-specific connections, inclusive disjunctions, nomadic conjunctions" (143)—I must, therefore, also acknowledge the criticisms of Caren Kaplan who argues that the poststructuralist use of the nomad as a metaphor for desire actually represents the practice of reterritorialization. According to Kaplan, while such poststructuralist theorists as Deleuze and Guattari claim to deterritorialize desire from paradigms that organize non-compulsory heterosexual practice, by using the nomad as a metaphor for such desire these theorists also reterritorialize nomadic subjects and their actual material conditions. Kaplan, therefore, locates poststructuralism as a theory of high modernism and argues that the metaphors employed by Deleuze and Guattari are synonymous with Euro-American modernist discourses that romanticize the mobility of wide-open spaces at the expense of the historical and material complexities of actual nomadic subjects.

**The Hobo-Sexual Bricolage**[7]

In the following pages, then, I map the hobo-sexual at the intersection of not-for-profit practices of sex and labor—a site influenced by Morton's queer materialism, Butler's provisionality of the identity sign, Deleuze and Guattari's molecular machines, and Kaplan's critique of the subject as metaphor. In mapping the hobo-sexual as a queer site of nonproductive expenditure in both sex and work, I challenge the potential erasure of differences under the identity sign and insist on a reading of sexual practice as it relates to class. Such a reading, unlike that fixed by the generalization of queer as an identity sign, also requires, in its consideration of class, reflections on how difference, such as that of race and/or gender, is also managed at such an intersection. I argue, in other words, that the hobo-sexual insists on a reading of queer as it relates to labor and that any examination of labor must always consider difference in its analysis. By extension, I also argue that sexual identity signs, in their more general application, do not necessitate an inherent consideration of these differences.

For my own purposes as a scholar of American literature, I have located the hobo-sexual in American cultural history. I draw predominantly on the work of Nels Anderson, whose own hoboing practices greatly influenced his sociological research on hobos while enrolled at the University of Chicago. Based on direct participation and observation, Anderson's *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*, published in 1923 to inaugurate the University of

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[7] I use the term bricolage here as does George Chauncey in *Gay New York* to mean "the manipulation and revaluation of the signs and practices available" (25). While the term bricolage is typically associated with taking what is available and combining it in new ways, the term also suggests the manipulation of material available and the novel combination of such as rendering new meaning.

Chicago Press's Sociological Series, not only offers a wealth of information regarding hobo subculture without the prevailing moral high ground regarding sexual practices, but also concentrates on the more unfamiliar hobo who traversed the U.S. before the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Taking Kaplan's arguments regarding poststructuralism seriously, in chapters one and two, I use Anderson's work to historicize the American hobo from which the hobo-sexual is generated. In the first chapter, I pay particular attention to the dominant discourses that produce the hobo as the tramp, or the shift from the mythology of the American hobo to that of the tramp (of which the hobo is a type) as national monster, particularly noticeable in the late-nineteenth century. Highlighted in this section are the discursive productions of the tramp as a contagion able to infect the entire nation with lethargy; the tramp as Other employed to define the productive citizen; and the tramp as a victim of violence, signifying the material manifestation of dominant discursive technologies. This chapter, then, ruptures any deodorized version of an American hobo mythology by accentuating capitalism's violent treatment of such an historical figure.

Chapter two considers the counter-discursive productions of the hobo and tramp—antagonistic discourse that resignifies the hobo as the slave of the capitalist. This section pays particular attention to the attempts at organizing the hobo by labor organizations, such as the Industrial Workers of the World and the International Brotherhood Welfare Organization. Accentuated in my analysis of the rhetoric employed by such organizations is the reliance on binary logic that permeates such discourse. Not unlike dominant discourse, labor discourse

produced by the I.W.W. and I.B.W.A. predominantly promotes the hobo by devaluing the capitalist, as opposed to emphasizing and analyzing their dialectical relationship. Additionally, the resignification of the hobo by the I.B.W.A. actually dismisses the hobo's agency or desire to travel and, as well, excludes the tramp from the hobo appellation. This chapter also considers the hobo productions of Jack London and includes an argument that the author's hobo/tramp productions speak to both a critique of the industrial capitalist system and to the hobo's agency, a combination I find useful in my mapping of the hobo-sexual.

Like these first two chapters, chapter three relies heavily on cultural texts produced during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The third chapter introduces the medical and popular productions of sexuality and masculinity in order to articulate the intersection of labor and sex that maps the hobo-sexual as an appropriation and transformation of the mythology of the American hobo. Represented is the collision between discourses that manage sex and those that manage labor—a confrontation that exposes inconsistencies in medical and labor reform discourse. Also noted at this intersection of not-for-profit labor and sex discourse are the bodies of nonproductive expenditure that have been denied a place in American hobo history. I argue that considerations of class, race and gender are necessary in a hobo-sexual connective history because of its inherent emphasis on labor.

The fourth chapter consists of a reading of particular lesbian texts through a hobo-sexual lens. While lesbian literature has been read as un/popular culture,[8] I read the lesbian as hobo-sexual as an exercise in what Laura Kipnis refers to as a practice in left popular culture—a disarticulation of the lesbian (and hobo) from dominant discourse followed by a transformation in meaning that speaks to antagonistic discourses. I argue that reading these texts as lesbian does not necessitate a consideration of class and race. The identity sign, in fact, has the potential to reduce various antagonisms to a singular ontological difference. Reading through a hobo-sexual lens, however, insists on a reorganization of perception, a focus on the management of race in labor and, as well, a critical consideration of the classed consequences of hobo-sexual practices.

Throughout the writing of this project, I have been influenced by Hennessy's envisioning in *Profit and Pleasure* of a "powerful and monstrous collective opposition of all of capitalism's disenfranchised subjects" (229). Hennessy critiques what she describes as "dead identities [that] are not open to history" (228) and promotes instead the "disidentifying subject" who practices the "process of unlearning that opens up the identities we take for granted to the historical conditions that make them possible" (229). Her theory of a coalition politics connects various identities by locating them in discourses of "sensation and affect" that have historically organized desire into categories of "allowed and outlawed human needs" (217). The hobo-sexual requires an opening up of identity to enable a connecting of differences among those groups traditionally

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[8] See, for instance, Kathleen Martindale's *Un/popular Culture: Lesbian Writing after the Sex Wars* (1997).

divided and conquered within capitalist regimes. The following, while far from an exhaustive study of the collision between the discursive management of labor and sex, develops a queer site in which the differences of class, gender, sexuality, and race connect without erasure. The end result is a *classed* queer extension in American cultural history.

## The American Hobo: Dominant Discursive Productions

Considering Caren Kaplan's argument regarding the reterritorialization of nomadic subjects by poststructural theorists, this chapter focuses specifically on the dominant discursive productions of the American hobo, including the construction of the hobo as the rugged individual of Manifest Destiny but particularly his altered construction as the tramp in national reform discourse. In mapping the cultural productions of the hobo in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, I also accentuate the direct results of tramp reform discourse that worked dialectically with popular constructions, in that reform discourse justified the employment of disciplinary mechanisms, including violence. The following, therefore, problematizes the traditional mythology of the American hobo by emphasizing the objectification of the Othered transient and, in the process, works to disarticulate the hobo as the romanticized wanderer of an idealized American landscape. My methodology consists of a materialist approach to historical discourse in that I, like Rosemary Hennessy, argue that "knowledge is politically organized" (*Materialist* 2) and that the materiality of discourse reveals itself in the actual histories of objectified bodies.

### In Search of the American Hobo

The term *hobo* maintains a tendency towards trouble. While the signifier of hobo continues to produce the word image of a poor white man—complete with five-o'clock shadow, patchwork pants, and a bandana plump with necessities

tied to the end of a stick which is then balanced on his shoulder—this particular image actually more closely represents one of the initial versions of the American clown that, while influenced by the hobo as a model of wandering and social deviance, also tended to render this same floating proletariat comical and, in turn, eclipsed much of the hobo's material history.[1] In essence, the most popular image of the hobo in the American imagination, the image having remained most static and representative of the hobo of the past, is actually a copy or an imitation. There is, of course, no *original* hobo. But there does exist a variety of cultural texts that produced such a typology of the American landscape.

Another troubling tendency is the term *hobo* itself, which renders its etymological pursuit an exercise in futility. Historians, sociologists, as well as most hobos, agree; the origin of the term is unknown. Tales of its initial source, however, are prolific. Jack London, for instance, in a short story run under the title "Local Color" in *The Western Home Monthly* in June of 1906, writes of the term originating from the French language. "'Hautbois[2]—there's the French of it,'" says London's speaker to an inquisitive outsider (104). "'In English it becomes hautboy . . . a wooden musical instrument . . . an oboe, in fact. . . . From this to ho-boy is but a step. . . . in York City hautboy, or ho-boy, becomes the name by which the night scavenger is known'" (104) London's speaker

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[1] In my researching the American hobo, the clown appeared often as a sub-link, so to speak. One clown web site I found particularly interesting lists the "Sad Tramp or Happy Hobo" as a distinct type of "character clown" in clown history. According to this site, Charlie Chaplin's performances represent the "down-on-his-luck tramp," as opposed to Red Skelton's performances as Freddy the Freeloader that represent the "devil may care attitude" of the hobo clown ("Clown History").

[2] In order to prevent any misreading of London's brief sketch of the etymology of the term hobo from the French hautbois, it should be noted that the anglicized phonetics of such a reading of "bois" is boys, as it is in the pronunciation of W.E.B. Dubois, for instance.

associates the English and French terms by noting their shared histories in the form of "'contempt for wandering players and musical fellows'" (104). For some London's rendition may seem like quite a jump in etymo-logic. But his speaker's breakdown of the production of the term hobo actually gestures toward yet another French derivative, that of the greeting "Hey, Bo," which, according to some sources, represented a "sarcastic greeting," its use a "corruption" of the word *beau*, the "French word for dandy," which "the hobo definitely was not" ("Hobo History"). Other, and perhaps more practical tales of the origin of hobo, consist of its beginning located in the Northwestern United States. Railroad mail-handlers of the nineteenth century allegedly yelled "ho, boy" as they tossed mailbags from the trains to the ground. The argument follows that the term was repeated so often around railroad yards that its connotation shifted from a warning of thrown mail bags to a term that referred to those who traveled *like* mail bags, tucked away quietly in box cars ("Hobo History"). Yet another telling of the origin of the term hobo, one which seems to have gained a following because of its historical practicality (read: association with work practices), begins with the label of "hoe boy," a term used to brand migratory farm workers who consistently carried farm implements, most notably a hoe, in the nineteenth century. The label hoe boy was then abbreviated to hobo ("Hobo History").

**An Asocial American**

Since its first use in the English language in 1889, *hobo* has always signified a rather uncivilized place in regard to the United States' agenda.[3] According to Nels Anderson, although historically catalogued as primarily white and male, the hobo's inability and/or[4] refusal to adhere to the map of capitalism—designed to engender career, home, and family, its emphasis on stasis and acquisition—rendered the hobo a deviant of the nation he traversed.[5] Considered

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[3] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "hobo" demarcated the difference between the "tramp," who did not work, and the itinerant unskilled worker who did. But as Kenneth Allsop reminds us in *Hard Travellin'*, while the westward expansion of the nineteenth century required unskilled laborers, the employment advertisements note a particular preference: men of "constant employment," meaning "two years," and "with families" (inside cover).

[4] I use the and/or construction here to denote both the inability of the hobo to remain in one place, in that, at times, he must find work for sustenance that may require him to leave, and his refusal to remain on a particular job. Both are hobo practices.

[5] While the hobo is a nineteenth-century production, the wanderer (or vagabond) consisted of a threat as early as the 1700s. David J. Rothman, in *The Discovery of the Asylum*, lists the vagabond of colonial period as a distinct feature on historical communal manuscripts concerned specifically with the care of the poor. According to Rothman, influenced predominantly by theocratic doctrine, the colonists of the early eighteenth century defined the poor by "the fact of need, not the special circumstances that caused it" (4). Considered poor, then, were widows and orphans, the insane, the disabled, the sick, and the aged—those unable to fend for themselves. Colonists did not differentiate between types of poor when it came to social responsibility in the form of charity. Rothman adds that the technology at work was particularly "ministerial sermons on charity" that repeatedly "set down communal obligations to the poor without bothering to delineate exactly who fit into the category" (4). And, in turn, communities felt a moral obligation to care for their poor, for colonists worked under the assumption that poverty was a result of divine providence. A hierarchical plan of resources was "not accidental or fortuitous, but providential" (7). Despite the latitude in defining poverty and the religious obligation to absorb it, however, these same colonists refused to support what they deemed "rogues and vagabonds," or the "needy outsider," and, in turn, elaborated this detailed exclusion in statutes (5).

In essence, then, for the early eighteenth-century colonists, "residence" represented an "asset of the social order" (Rothman 19). Fear of the wandering outsider rendered a distinct set of rules and procedures insisting on the surveillance/investigation of each wanderer before occupying a community. According to Rothman, outsiders complete with "certificates of good standing from their former church or town, or with property and occupational skills, were welcome" (19). In many townships the law established a system of certification. The practicality of such was to ensure that anybody who wished to move to another location would be able to do so without being treated as a vagrant. These certificates of good standing consisted of documentation that spoke to a person's "willingness to assume financial responsibility should he fall into need" (22). But the "poor stranger," or the wanderer or vagrant without these skills, certificates, or resources, "was to be excluded" because he or she might not only become an "expense to the town," but "a cause of disorder," as well (19). One assembly preamble cited in Rothman, for instance, specifically cites the ubiquitous presence of the poor wanderer—"'several idle and necessitous come, or are brought into this province from neighboring colonies . . . who have either fled from thence for fear of

an asocial figure with no fixed abode, the hobo moved predominantly alone and lived deliberately by wandering and working sporadically in various outskirts of surrounding cities as an unskilled laborer of ditch digging, coal shovelling, and railway construction. He was also a staple worker in lumber camps and fields filled with seasonal harvests. Anderson states that the typical practice of the hobo was to earn simply enough wages on the urban outskirts to then spend in the urban centers in the form of sustenance required to maintain his wanderlust—or his pathological desire to move (82-85).[6] In essence, the hobo worked primarily to eat and sleep in order to maintain his health and, in turn, his mobility; he resisted the practice of the model consumer who rests and invests, as well as accumulates, in the commodified city. Rather, the hobo typically ate and slept

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punishment for their crimes, or being slothful and unwilling to work'" (qtd. in Rothman 21). By 1721, the vagrant-as-criminal surfaced in laws that spoke to the surveillance and support of the poor; documented law, states Rothman, consisted of records that spoke more to the illegalities supporting vagrants than to any specific management of the community's poor. Sections inclusive of punitive measures suggested the surveillance and penalty for vagrancy had increased. Vagrants who had been escorted out of town but had returned, for instance, were to receive "'thirty-five lashes,'" and those boarding strangers who had not registered properly with the town officials should expect jail time (qtd. in Rothman 21). By 1727, Rhode Island laws, while still insisting the township be responsible for its own poor, erected "the staunchest barriers against intrusion" (22). A specific act of that year enabled the Town Council "'to receive or reject any persons from becoming inhabitants'" and justified such exclusionary procedures as necessary in the prevention of "diverse vagrant and indigent persons" taking advantage of "'lax residents'" (qtd. in Rothman 23).

While most townships relied on "the settlement and poor-relief laws" intended to "combat the rogue vagabond," more densely populated areas utilized the well-known English versions of poverty management—the workhouse and the almshouse (25). However, "in comparison to the English investment," states Rothman, "Americans spent very small sums" on building these workhouse and almshouse structures (25). While Rothman insists that institutions, like the almshouse and workhouse, were a "minor theme in colonial history," he further asserts that the primary purpose for the structures was "to force inmates to labor," which seemed an "appropriate way to punish the petty criminal" and to "discriminate the needy stranger from entering the community" (25-26). In other words, the workhouse functioned as a structure in which was quarantined "the germ of disorder" of "'persons who wander about, and are vagabond, idle and dissolute'" (27)—a governing responsibility. And the Connecticut assembly, for one, "put the rogue vagabond first on the list of inmates" (27).

[6] Anderson states that there are two terms employed when socio-medico authorities speak of vagrancy: wanderlust and dromomania. Both are developed as "a type of pathology of chronic wandering" (xvii). For another reference to wanderlust, see Flynt's *Tramping with Tramps*, and for dromomania, Thompson's *Sister of the Road* (ed. Reitman).

with fellow transients in the "hobo jungles," areas located on the outskirts of town, near the watering tanks of railroads, relatively free from the surveillance of the local law. Here hobos shared food, stories, politics, and newspapers from various states (16-20).

Of course, the hobo did spend money. According to Anderson, "when hobos are in town with money to spend they 'go the limit' while it lasts, and then they go out to work" again (140). This practice of going the limit, however, rejected the standard custom of accumulation. When in the city, the hobo may very well have "invest[ed] in a whole outfit—shoes, suit, and overcoat—only to sell them again in a few days when he [was] broke" (36). This practice of "clothing exchange" took place at second-hand clothing stores, where "new clothes [were] on sale at astonishingly low prices. . . . Much of it . . . out of date and either shopworn or soiled" (35). While Anderson admits that the second-hand dealer's profit was made in the "coming and going" of the hobo, he also emphasizes that "the veteran hobo kn[ew] how to drive a bargain" in this exchange (36).

Particularly in the winter months, the hobo may have chosen to sleep indoors, but did so most often in lodging houses that offered a range of affordable accommodations, from "a bed in a single room for fifty cents to a location [on] the floor of an empty loft for a dime" (27). His evening of urban entertainment consisted of the "cheap playhouses of Hobohemia" that produced "the show girls who s[a]ng or dance[d] in the cheap burlesque theaters" (141). These performances promised "titillations" considered by moral citizens "vulgar and

inexpensive" (141). So, too, he typically bought a bottle or two of whisky and a long-awaited pack of cigarettes, but the majority of his day was spent walking the urban avenues, listening to fellow hobo street orators preach socialism, as well as frequenting the employment bureaus that offered opportunity for travel.

The hobo's kinetic history, according to Anderson, consisted primarily of an asocial practice, regardless of whether or not the hobo happened to be jumping a train in the midst of travel or loitering about on an urban avenue where other hobos gathered. The hobo practice of *beating* a train, for instance, which in hobo speak means jumping a train while the steam engine is in motion, diminished any hope for community travel. And while groups of hobos approached the moving train simultaneously, each individual attempt in the end ranged from success to injury or death. While two men or more shared the same objective of beating the same train in order to reach a destination that required temporary labor, more often than not these groups dissipated by way of particular obstacles and challenges, including disembarking a position too early because of the damage rocks and other debris caused to the body, as well as the confrontation with tunnels that required of the hobo who rode on top of the train an immediate change of position, to include one entirely off the train when faced with imminent death. Of course, beating a train consisted of one of the more hazardous hobo practices and was, therefore, considered the boast of more seasoned veterans of the road. Most hobos who desired a free ride, before attempting passage on the rods or tops of any train, would first attempt to locate an unlocked boxcar attached to a train soon to depart the rail station.

If by chance a boxcar had been left unlocked, typically several hobos would find their way into the boxcar, resulting in hobo aggregates, such as those found in jungles and on urban avenues. Superficially read, these hobos appeared to travel in bands or in groups, such as nomadic Gypsies, but more often than not, these groups consisted of strangers who gravitated together in a more spontaneous fashion. Once the box car with hobos began to move along its tracks, its hobo inhabitants, as is also the case on the urban street or in the jungle, would share information regarding the availability of work in particular areas, debate politics, share stories of the road, discuss socialism and the abolishment of the wage, barter personal items, sing songs most familiar to any man of the road, and sleep. This social networking of hobos consisted predominantly of masquerade, however, particularly in the form of the tall tale and the moniker—or nickname—as well as the absence of any personal information. These aggregate spaces, while used primarily for information about available work and the bosses of such work, maintained an asocial atmosphere where men could re-make themselves in various ways, whether for pleasure or for protection, by spinning boastful tales of extreme mileage covered on little to no money, as well as by re-naming themselves with a chosen moniker that disguised their previous existence from their identity on the road. Several monikers used by hobos began with a geographical location, such as Ohio Slim,[7] but whether or not these geographical labels held any key to Ohio Slim's former life or origin mattered little to hobos in the practice of making it all up as they went along.

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[7] Simply one of many monikers including a geographical location. Reference to Ohio Slim located in *Tramping with Tramps* by Josiah Flynt (372).

Roger A. Bruns argues that hobo practices actually burgeoned with the end of the American Civil War, that the hobo existed at least three decades before the term hobo had become common. A noticeable number of former soldiers of both the Union and Confederate armies took to a life of transience after 1865. According to Bruns, the reasons for this increase in transience range from the trauma of war itself as engendering an asocial desire for life on the road, as well as the orphaned status of many whose relatives had died in direct combat or were tallied as collateral damage. The post-Civil War, then, ushered in a noticeable transient population—consisting of young men, typically white, in their twenties, and of American birth. This casual work force sold much of its hard labor building the railroads of Western expansion that complemented national ideologies of Manifest Destiny and rugged individualism. Bruns notes that the internal conflict of the Civil War had halted much of American railroad construction, including the federal grants that fuelled such production. Colleen A. Dunlavy notes that, as early as 1850, railroad mileage in the nation had already more than doubled a levelled-off canal construction of 3,700 miles. And even earlier in 1840 a specifically Americanized version of railroad construction—substituting wood for iron wherever possible—began to flourish when capital had become scarce. Not until after the Civil War, in 1869, however, was the first transcontinental railroad completed—on May 10th, the Central Pacific Railroad built from California eastward met the Union Pacific in Promontory, Utah. By 1880, the railway system of the United States had tripled in size, "reaching more than ninety thousand miles as railroad capital exceeded five billion dollars"

(Dunlavy 648). With this boom in railroad construction, as well as Mid-Western harvests and Northeastern lumber yards yet to be predominantly influenced by industrial machinery, the hobo's asocial lifestyle of wandering and working sporadically fit the national landscape of excessive production. Both Bruns and Dunlavy note, however, that the amount of capital invested in the American railroad system exceeded its imagined surplus value, which resulted in company downsizing and collapse.

In 1873, Jay Cooke and Company—the banking and financial agent for the Northern Pacific Railroad—collapsed, and with its failure an economic depression materialized. According to Bruns, foreign business withdrew from American investments due to a European financial crisis. The American national economic trajectory then "began to crumble," rendering an economic climate of more than "100 financial houses collapsed, business and insurance companies closed" and the end of the railroad boom (28). Bruns asserts that "wild speculation in railroads and overexpansion in almost every part of the economy" weakened the entire American financial structure (28). Not only did an estimated 500,000 railroad workers lose their jobs, but unemployment affected all factory work associated with railroad construction and maintenance, particularly the labor located in "the foundries, the rolling mills, and the machine shops" (28) A national unemployment rate of nearly "40 percent" led to a burgeoning of men on the road looking for work and, in turn, local and state intervention in what would then be deemed *The Tramp Question* (28). This same economic shift, in other words, altered the representation of the hobo—the rugged individual celebrated as

a sign of economic growth—to that of the tramp, or the economic Other, in need of reform.

Judith Halberstam argues that there is a "technology of monsters" specific to the nineteenth century and its economic and national climates (21). While Halberstam maps British Gothic literature and twentieth century film, her arguments regarding the production and consumption of the monster aid in understanding the American public production and consumption of what would be known as *the tramp* in the late nineteenth century. Halberstam, for instance, notes that the eighteenth-century Gothic staple of location—the castle or the abbey—the place where fear resides in the eighteenth century, shifts to occupy the objectified body of the monster by the 1800s. This shift to the body, argues Halberstam, represents the national agenda of Othering. The body of Dracula, for instance, speaks to nineteenth-century physiognomies of the Jew, as well as to the aristocracy, the blurring of genders, perverse sexuality, and a reproduction of the same, which threatened the "Englishness" (14) of the nation. I would argue, as well, that the public production of the American tramp in the nineteenth century represents the gradual shift from locating national fear in the discourses of imagined primitive and uncivilized places yet to be territorialized to the bodies of the unemployed denizen who occupied the *civilized* places of an alleged progressive nation. Granted, the fear produced by discourses of expansion and, therefore, place from the nation's beginning have always included the indigenous Other—manipulated tales of the primitive and barbaric native population—but also produced were discourses armed with Manifest Destiny that sanctioned the

pillaging of native villages, the slaughtering of native inhabitants, as well as the Christian colonizing of those who remained. Since the national agenda of westward expansion depended on citizens and their settlements, territorial fear needed to be squelched. The transformation of the fears of unchartered territories into an emphasis on the adventure and opportunities associated with early development, not to mention the added discourse of the heroics of colonizers, produced the understanding of a national control over any threat of native Others.[8] With newly colonized territories and the native Other no longer considered a national menace, the economic depression of the late nineteenth century produced the tramp, or the unemployed wandering homeless man, as a national monster. The tramp, unlike the native Other, however, was an American; in essence, the monster was no longer foreign, but local—Halberstam's monstrous parasite buried alive—a denizen species that consumed but did not produce, yet one that perpetually returned like the repressed. In transforming the hobo into the tramp, and the tramp into a national monster, public discourse eclipsed a criticism of capitalism b[illegible]roviding privileged citizens with the economic Other. Located within binary logic, the tramp acted as foil in the production of idealized citizenship and subjectivity.

The tramp proved most threatening to the industrial city of capitalism. He was the streetwalker of a monstrous non-productive expenditure, whose perceived idleness and rag picking practices deemed him a useless feature of the bourgeois urban landscape. His mere ambling and inability or lack of desire to accumulate

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[8] While there is no absolute date, the romanticization of the cowboy (previously considered uncouth) was romanticized in literature around the 1890s (Etulain 21).

the newest of commodities resulted in his being labelled a loiterer. A constant threat to the rhetoric of a progressive nation, he became the victim of vagrancy laws that either led to his incarceration or sent him out of town prematurely with the clear message that to be a United States citizen was to own property.[9]

**A Science of the Tramp**

The tramp—a collective term for hobos, itinerant workers, peddlers, and scam artists used by the American public to define predominantly able-bodied, unemployed men who wandered into towns and local urban communities—was designated a national problem in the late-nineteenth century. Public discourse not only shaped the tramp into a national monster, but produced multiple courses of action to reform such an American monstrosity. While some writers did critique capitalism and the industrial revolution as the cause of unemployment and trampdom, the majority of discourse produced argued for either liberal strategies in the form of charity or reform platforms that supported incarceration and even physical abuse. Charitable organizations consisted primarily of religious groups that often provided hot meals for tramps, but only after they had attended organized gatherings that offered spiritual salvation.[10] More predominant,

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[9] Jack London's account of having been arrested in Niagara Falls (U.S. side) represents an example of how hobos were criminalized for their lack of permanent residency. London was sentenced to "thirty days' imprisonment for having no fixed abode and no visible means of support." He reports that after having his "head clipped," his "budding mustache shaved," and his body "compulsorily vaccinated" and "dressed in convict stripes," he became a socialist. For "some of his plethoric national patriotism simmered down and leaked out of the bottom of his soul somewhere" (*Jack London On the Road* 100).

[10] Anderson notes that the objective of most charitable missions consisted of converting the hobo (tramp) to Christianity. In a rather humorous anecdote, a hobo tells of his most recent presence at a mission in Chicago: "'Oh, it's just like all of them. I wanted to laugh out loud when I saw that

however, was a science of discipline mapped onto the body of the tramp. Incarceration—whether in the form of the prison, the almshouse, or the boy's school—contained tramp bodies and kept them from public view, yet still under the surveillance of an authoritative gaze in charge of studying the tramp; discourses of knowledge regarding delinquency and abnormality proliferated.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault maps a distinct shift in penalty and punishment produced and implemented fully by the nineteenth century, particularly noting Jeremy Bentham's architectural design of the Panopticon, as well as Léon Faucher's construction of a rigid schedule for prisoners in Paris after 1837. Near the end of the eighteenth century, the public display of pain—represented by Foucault in the tearing of flesh with red-hot pincers, the filling of flesh wounds with a combination of hot wax, lead, and resin, and the attempted quartering of Damiens the regicide by four horses unable to fulfill their expectations, but repetitiously commanded to strive all the same—was substituted with a more closeted science of discipline aimed at reforming the prisoner behind closed doors. Replacing the public display of pain for punishment was an engineering of the individual mapped onto the bodies of criminals, regulated and perpetuated by judges, wardens, and medical physicians, its primary objective to catalogue prisoners and transform these criminals into docile workers, or automatons, who could then fuel the factories of capitalism with no resistance to orders or wages assigned. The engineering of the individual consisted of a disciplinary method practiced outside the penal system as well. Other institutions

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old duck get saved. He gets saved every winter. This winter he got saved twice. He always manages to get saved in missions where there is something to eat'" (254).

of the industrial state, such as the military, hospitals, schools, and factories, adopted the disciplinary mechanisms that promised docility and, therefore, less resistant bodies aimed toward production.[11] In essence, this system of disciplinary mechanisms was to thwart the potentially corrupt individual by ensuring a disciplined, or homogeneous, good citizen—one able to produce at the factories, as well as to reproduce such homogeneity by accepting and practicing such subjugation.

Of course, Foucault's mapping does not cease at the institutional level. His arguments regarding the technology of discipline reconsider networks of power as falling on a "carceral continuum" represented by the transformation of "the punitive procedure into a penitentiary technique," resulting in a reinscription of the "technique from the penal system to the entire social body" (298). And the carceral network is omnipresent; like Louis Althusser's mapping of ideology, "there is no outside" (Foucault 301). According to Foucault, the "carceral 'naturalizes' the legal power to punish, as it 'legalizes' the technical power to discipline," emanating from the power knowledge gained through the supervision, assessment and classification of delinquency, which results in discourses of knowledge that chart abnormality and, therefore, exclusion. For Foucault, "the carceral network does not cast the unassimilable into a confused hell" (301); instead, "it saves everything, including what it punishes" (301). The delinquent,

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[11] According to Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, the basic principles of such a science of discipline consisted of an emphasis on spatialization, or an acceptance of one's place; implemented hierarchies that ensured each rank carefully watched over those beneath it; repetitive exercises, as well as close control of activity, demonstrated by time-tables or scheduling of daily life; and normalizing judgments perpetuated by both reward and punishment, as opposed to the law that merely punished poor behavior.

then, serves at least two purposes: 1.) to be *saved*, or transformed into the homogeneous citizen and 2.) if resistant to transformation, to be *saved* as a representation of abnormality that, by way of binary logic, buttresses and defines its opposite—normality. These discourses of knowledge that define normality need be continually reproduced and, indeed, are in either the testimonies of those who have been saved by the rewards of discipline and homogeneity, or in the consistent exclusion and punishment of those who have not.

The American public's preoccupation with the tramp in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries consisted of both a reaction to and a catalyst for the production of socio-medico discourses and an emphasis on reformed bodies. The passing of vagrancy legislation resulted in state officials obligated to arrest and, in turn, catalogue new and returning vagrants. While names, ages, places of birth, and former employment most often consisted of false answers or none at all from the tramps, documents recording the medical examinations and interviews of incarcerated tramps were filed for further social explorations into the tramp problem. In *One Thousand Homeless Men*, Alice W. Solenberger reports that "two-thirds of her 1,000 cases [of tramps] were either physically or mentally defective" (qtd. in Anderson 125). Ninety-three men had contracted tuberculosis; fifty-two had been diagnosed insane; forty men had some form of paralysis; and twenty-one had venereal disease. Topping the list, however, are one hundred and sixty eight men either "crippled, maimed, or deformed from birth or accident" (qtd. in Anderson 126). An object of study, the tramp became closely monitored regardless of whether or not charged with a crime. For instance, a study of the

Municipal Lodging Houses of New York City made by F. C. Laubach of one hundred transient men reports that "'28%'" of transients studied are "'able-bodied,'" while "'venereal disease'" tops the list of infirmities at "'26%'" (qtd. in Anderson 126). Another study by the Municipal Lodging Houses of New York City in 1915 reports "'of the 2,000 men who were given a medical examination, 1,774, approximately 9 out of every 10, were, according to the adjudgments of the examining physicians, physically able to work'" (qtd. in Anderson 127). Studies like these by individuals and state organizations fuelled a social hysteria associated particularly with the wandering non-resident.

Those studies that emphasized the able-bodies of the tramp encouraged further discourses of knowledge that understood the tramp as a mere loafer, idler, and ward of the working American citizenry. Angry citizens called for more local control of vagrancy and protection of private property. So, too, the railroad companies began hiring security officers, the most famous being those from the Pinkerton Agency. And the depiction of lodging houses[12]—described as unkempt, over-crowded, and crawling with bugs—combined with the statistics of the tramp's venereal disease to produced the tramp as a foul carrier of infection. As contagious, the tramp was also considered a threat to the nation's children; it was he who would charm young boys from their homes with tales of the road and, in the process, reproduce trampdom. Statistics, such as those documented by Solenberger, mapped danger and imminent death as the predominant features of

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[12] Photography of such derelict and dark places had become available to the public with the invention of the powder flash in the nineteenth century that enabled photographers, such as Jacob Riis, to illuminate such places of poverty in still photography. (See Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* for photography of lodging houses and slum residences in New York City in the nineteenth century.)

tramping and stimulated writers to compose morality tracts and novellas gauged for young audiences considering such a practice. Stressed in these short fictions are the hazards of the road, including the standard flat characters who had lost arms and legs attempting to ride the rods, alcoholics prone to fist fights, and others who would use the children on the road for begging, stealing the child's earnings. These short stories and novels, then, thwarted any romantic notion of financial independence on the road for the young reader.[13] Socio-medico discourse produced the tramp as an able-bodied, yet lazy, denizen in a parasitic relationship with the nation—an economic association that thwarted national progress and, therefore, required the transformation of the tramp into a worker and producer. But these same discourses also produced the tramp as a damaged body with impaired judgment—an infirm body that allegedly suffered from the nervous conditions of either wanderlust or dromomania, both conditions considered the pathological desire to move.[14]

In an article published in *The Galaxy* in 1876, for instance, Ely Van de Warker, M.D., argues the differences between the pauper and the tramp, but insists that both suffer from mental defects. Van de Warker first compares the pauper to the day-laborer "for a standard of mental measure" and argues that "these two classes stand at opposite poles of social conditions: one the rough element that enters into all material progress, the other the dead weight borne by society in its onward movement." Van de Warker continues to argue that,

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[13] Josiah Flynt Willard's *The Little Brother: A Story of Tramp Life* (1902), for instance, represents this genre.

[14] Anderson notes that sociological and medical discourse employed wanderlust to denote the "overwhelming desire to wander" as a "mania" (4). For references of dromomania, see Thompson's *Sisters of the Road* (ed. Ben Reitman).

because the United States has reached such a level of progress, some men are unable to continue at such a pace and, therefore, become "a residuum which filters down through the complicated meshes of society." The author maintains a Darwinian understanding of social and species processes, by which the pauper "is rejected material, unfit, by reason of his mental and physical defects, to be made an active part of the social fabric." According to Van de Warker, the pauper should be read as a residual effect of the aristocracy of England; it is the "heredity" manufactured by the mother, but "the least said about her, the better," responsible for this disease that manifests itself in the proof of "bodily peculiarities" of her offspring. Allegedly, the pauper's inability to continue alongside others of his race hinges on his aristocratic blood, proof of which is to be found "in his delicate hand, with taper fingers and almond-shaped nails. It is the hand of the nobleman, plus the dirt." The pauper's hands, as well as his "feet unaccustomed to the journey," "gradually yield" to the progressive production of the U.S. social fabric. But in studying the tramp, as well as denoting his "scientific value," Van de Warker insists that the tramp be considered "the disreputable embodiment of the modern spirit of unrest." Not endowed with the physiognomy of the aristocracy, the tramp has only poverty in common with the pauper. He is, rather than mentally and physically unable to continue with the progress of the nation, instead one who directs his energy into a "nomadic tendency" and this "inherited or acquired mental taint becomes a dead weight upon the productive portion of the community." The tramp, according to Van de Warker, is "diseased" in that he is "consumed by the madness of unrest," which

causes his ceaseless need to move. While it is most probable that the tramp represents a "psychological condition," in that he possesses "a diseased mind," Van de Warker admits that the tramp would make a more "interesting subject for scientific study" if his condition were considered a "reverting to the primordial type of our nomadic progenitors." Van de Warker suggests, then, that the "evolution" of the nation consists of a regressive resistance. "In the midst of the evolution, widely spread and steadily progressive," he writes, "there are others who are returning to the condition of primitive man. . . . tending to this evolution there are undercurrents which are carrying others back to a modified savagism." In theorizing the cause of such a potential epidemic of regression, Van de Warker locates the tramp's "hereditary taint" in families that have lost at least one member to the "the great army of tramps" or in those families where insanity is known to exist, as "trampism" is "one form" of insanity. Likewise, other families "in which peripatetic madness is liable to exist" consist of those with members who "show that in mental tone they differ from the average normal standard"; after all, a "latent insanity" may simply reveal itself in an "irresistible tendency to wander purposeless about, and which may either assume the more active form of mania or delusion."

These public productions of the tramp, whether that of the lazy loafer or the psychologically-challenged peripatetic, developed the wandering non-resident as a form of delinquency in need of surveillance. Medical discourses of knowledge assisted in perpetuating the taxonomizing of diseases and mental disorders that would translate into family histories and, in turn, boundaries for

reproduction, particularly employed by the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century. Likewise, during times of national economic crisis, the information gathered regarding the tramp class would be employed as power-knowledge in the answer to *the tramp question*. For as early as 1876, according to Van de Warker, "the only questions asked about the tramp" are "What shall we do with him? or How to exterminate him?"

**An Even Better (?) Science of the Tramp: Josiah Flynt**

While those in the socio-medico disciplines used the registries from lodging houses, prisons, and charitable missions to locate and quantify their objects of study, as well as in order to perform medical examinations and/or interviews to gain knowledge about the tramp, the American reading public was inundated with critiques of national institutions, such as the penal system, that arguably enabled and even promoted tramping practices. The public's indignation with state institutions consisted of reactions to discourses of knowledge regarding the tramp that were primarily of the socio-journalistic disciplines; in other words, much of the public's knowledge of tramps consisted of the published chronicles of a few who made a career of traveling with tramps, while also considering themselves researchers and never identifying with the despised class.[15] The most prolific and popular of these writers was Josiah Willard who published under the name Josiah Flynt throughout the late nineteenth

[15] Josiah Flynt, the most popular of these writers, considers himself "an American tramp" in one of his studies entitled "The Criminal in the Open"; however, he does so in reference to the jail time he spent while on the road and admits he was a "voluntary prisoner" (13). See *Tramping with Tramps*.

century.[16] Not only did Flynt receive profits from his published novella *Little Brother*, which consists of the morality genre, its ending emphasizing both the irresponsibility of the older tramp and the death of the boy who runs from home to ride the boxcars, but Flynt also published several articles, his first in 1891,[17] on the subject of vagabond life that appeared in various popular periodicals of the time, including the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Weekly*, which were eventually published in book form under the title *Tramping with Tramps* in 1899.

In *Tramping with Tramps*, Flynt maps his sketches as objective "picture[s] of the tramp world" and downplays the "incidental reference to causes and occasional suggestion of remedies," but his contribution to the knowledge-power mapped onto the tramp was hardly naive (ix). Considering himself a scientist[18] of "human parasites," Flynt not only describes the life of the tramp, but likewise exposes the tramp as a criminal by revealing several intricacies of tramping scams of which his reading public have been victims (ix). He develops an urban typology, or "'trampology'"(302), for the public, including "the street-beggar, the house-beggar, the office-beggar, and the old-clothes beggar" (124) and, as well, produces for them a class system of vagabonds, of which the "tomato-can tramp" (114) ranks lowest and the "gay-cat" (13) the highest with regard to economic mobility. Following the guidelines of the physiognomies, Flynt develops each tramp-type with specifics, such as the street-beggar's trick of using "the voice

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[16] Flynt also wrote various articles on tramps abroad, most specifically regarding those in Germany and England.

[17] "The Tramp at Home." *Contemporary Review* Aug. 1891.

[18] In his "Author's Note" that precedes *Tramping with Tramps*, Flynt compares the studies of his colleagues who work "in scientific laboratories to discover the minutest parasitic forms of life, and later publishing their discoveries in book form as valuable contributions to knowledge" to his own research performed on the subject of tramps "that may be considered scientific" because such research is conducted "on its own ground and in its peculiar conditions and environment" (ix).

rather than the hand," his location of Fifth Avenue in New York City, his chosen target that of women, and his innate ability to make "'clients'" (124) laugh heartily, assuring his well-being year round. Often these allegedly harmless sketches of urban tramp life include illustrations of the tramp typology being developed, as well as drawings of flop-houses, such as Old Boston Mary's Shanty; trespassers jumping passenger trains in railroad yards; and tramps being beaten by local inhabitants in the towns of Ohio and Indiana. Likewise, Flynt's rhetorical sketches reveal how tramps traveled for free on trains—on top on passenger trains, in the cars, on the bumpers,[19] or the rods on freights. He also develops persuasive images of the tramp's "'hang-outs'" (67) where those "cursed with this strange *Wanderlust*" (53) gather empty-handed only to be labelled "discouraged criminals" (17) by their social-scientific observer.

Flynt professes to differentiate between tramps and criminals, yet his rhetoric does more to blur the boundaries between the two than emphasize much of a distinction. It is, after all, disguised as a tramp that Flynt observes criminals; the study of tramp places enables his surveillance, and the author makes no reference to the difference between tramps and criminals, except to argue that "discouraged criminals," or those criminals who have "come to the conclusion that [crime] does not pay," "join the tramp class. . . . [they become] tramp[s] because it is the career that comes closest to the one [they] hoped to do well in" (17-18). According to Flynt, it is only the "punishment, or expiatory discipline" that the criminal receives under law that convinces him that "society will not

[19] Riding the "bumpers" of trains consists of the tramp wedging himself between boxcars and either lying on the narrow slab or clutching the boxcar ladder. (See Anderson, DeLorenzo, Flynt, and London.)

tolerate such conduct" and he, therefore, as a result of such "instruction" (27-28), "bids good-by to his more tenacious brethren" (18) and becomes a tramp. Flynt's argument then extends to the tramp problem. He writes, "Now that he is a tramp, the same principle must be applied to him again; make him a *discouraged vagabond*. Such is the treatment which society must bring to bear on the deliberate law-breaker" (27 emphasis added).

Armed with his hands-on observation techniques, Flynt argues against the scientific observations of criminologists in the nineteenth century who employ information gathered regarding the incarcerated criminal. "Of this mass of information, gathered in great part by prison doctors and other prison officials," he writes, "the conclusion has been drawn that the criminal is a more or less degenerate human being. . . . and in a large number of instances, should be in an insane asylum rather than a penitentiary" (2). According to Flynt, these medical observations have resulted in useless statistics regarding the criminal's physiognomy, or "body, skull, [and] face" (1), that do not aid in furthering knowledge for reform. Flynt recommends his personal tactics—for "criminology to study the criminal's *milieu*" (26)—in order to discover that the criminal actually consists of a much different parasite than formerly thought. For instance, he questions prison interviews that, according to the author, consist of misrepresentations. "How do they know?" he asks his audience; "[the criminal] may want to appear degenerated or queer, or is perhaps mischievous and says the first thing that comes into his head" (10). Flynt continues to dismantle scientific publications by counter-arguing that, in his travels and studies, he has found the

criminal to be of good health; of American birth (typically Irish-American); and possessing a great deal of "will-power" (11) and wit, as well as sanity.

Flynt insists that the reproduction of criminals, as well as tramps, is due to "pure and simple laziness handed down from generation to generation until it has become a chronic family disease" (30). He admits that how "to tame" or "rescue" (33) the children of these "degenerate Americans" (30) baffles him, but, while "it always seems harsh to apply strict law to delinquents so young and practically innocent, it is the only remedy [he] can offer" (33). Of children who are forced to beg on the road, Flynt adamantly opposes the rhetoric of the socialists and labor agitators who insist that poverty consists of a "human woe caused by inhuman capitalists" (43). Rather, he argues that the children's hunger leads them to beg, and this hunger is a direct result of "more often than not the drunken father or mother" who suffers from "selfish indulgence, and not of ill adjusted labor conditions" (46). In his musings regarding young children on the road who have formed gangs and meet in hideouts after stealing property or simply ruining it by throwing rocks, however, Flynt appears more sympathetic. These "Kids," Flynt argues, are "mentally maimed, and *practically* belong in an insane asylum" (75 emphasis added). "A more scientific century," he adds, "will institute medical treatment of juvenile crime and reform schools where the cure of insanity will be as much an object as moral instruction and character-building" (75). Flynt's seemingly ironic reversal of the existence of insanity, or at least the mentally maimed, in trampdom is loaded, however. For Flynt, the cure for insanity over time not only relies upon the assumption that science is progressive, and that its

objective is to aid in the homogenizing of citizens, but the reference also suggests that sanity, like morality and character, is a direct result of disciplinary action.

Flynt's design for reform of American tramps and criminals hinges on discipline and punishment. But his sketches inclusive of references to the American penal system, with an occasional exception,[20] depict such institutions as having failed in their ability to discipline and/or punish criminals, leading to an overwhelming rate of recidivism. While he admits that the incarceration of miscreants aids in their eventual shift from full-fledged criminals to the discouraged variety, he further argues that such an alteration in vocation results only after a series of excessive visits to the penitentiary. According to Flynt, the criminal expects to be arrested from time to time, but as long as he manages a "'vacation' as they call it, of eight to ten months, and is lucky enough during this period to make sufficient 'hauls' to compensate" (18) for his jail time, he will continue in criminal activity. Allegedly, the criminal acts with "morality" and reason regarding his criminal career; he "[takes] something from society and [gives] in exchange so many years of [his] life. If [he] comes out ahead, so much the better for [him]; if society comes out ahead, so much the worse for [him]" (22). Because the criminal relies on this arrangement of exchange, Flynt seems to suggest extended stays in penal institutions that will decrease the ration of time needed for the criminal to compensate for his incarceration. At the current rate, he writes, "between ten and fifteen years are enough to frighten men out of the business" (17). The author also explains that "'the shivers'"—body tremors that are a direct result of the "terror of capture"—consist of the "main reason the

[20] Massachusetts, for instance, considered more specifically in the following paragraph.

criminal is afraid to go beyond the fifteen year limit" (17). Yet Flynt also constructs himself as a defender of the public and argues that the cost inherent in extended stays in prison burdens the American citizenry. In this shift, he exposes the abuses of the penal system by the tramp, rendering the state institution the actual culprit in the reproduction of criminality and trampdom. He writes:

> the jails are a great boon for the fraternity. In the majority of them there is *no work to do*, while some furnish tobacco and the daily papers. Consequently, in winter, one can see tramps sitting comfortably on benches drawn close to the fire, and reading their morning paper, and smoking their after-breakfast pipe, as complacently and calmly as the merchant in his counting-room. Here they find refuge from the storms of winter, and make themselves entirely at home. (99 emphasis added)

Other briefer references to the tramp's misuse of the jails are scattered throughout Flynt's work; he refers to the standard tramp migration to the south during the winter season, but reveals, as well, the "others who *prefer* a jail in the North" (154 emphasis added), as well as his story of "three tramps who came into town [and] decided that the local jail would be a good place to spend the winter" (160).

Littered amidst these sketches of the tramp's ability to use the penal system are also various references to Flynt's consideration of forms of discipline proven to thwart trampdom. In "The American Tramp, Considered Geographically," for instance, Flynt considers New Jersey, where "there are more tramps to the square mile than in any other State, excepting Pennsylvania" (99).

The reasons engendering such multitudes consist of tramps being "unmolested" (99) in their hangouts on the outskirts of town, as well as their begging being considerably propitious. Throughout this article, Flynt practices a rather passive-aggressive rhetoric that clarifies for readers that there consist of two disciplinary failures that lead to tramp populations: The first is the law that prefers to relocate tramps by pushing them along to other cities and towns as opposed to arresting and reforming them. The second failure falls to citizens who continue to feed and/or provide money for the tramp, allowing him to thrive in their locale. In Pennsylvania, for instance, Flynt mentions that the tramp "is best fed," but he receives the most money from begging in New York (99). New York, while generous with regard to the releasing of vagabonds, however, practices "the brutal club-swinging" of tramps (100). Flynt then compares these states to that of Massachusetts which he considers "poor territory for the usual class of vagrants," particularly because of its "jail system" (97). "In many of these jails," he writes, "the order and discipline are superb" and that "work is required of the prisoners—and work is the last thing a real tramp ever means to undertake" (97). While Flynt never outright claims that work is of the essence where discipline is concerned, his comparison leaves little doubt that the Massachusetts' work directive leads to a dwindled population of the tramp kind. Likewise, in his assessment of Chicago, Flynt argues that tramps are somewhat deceived by the generosity of the citizens because the "policemen handle beggars according to law whenever they catch them" (100), and the law requires physical beatings.

Contained in all of these examples, though never explicitly clarified, is the presence of a public that works against its own disciplinary systems. States inclusive of either penal programs that require work of tramps, or even those that use physical abuse to deter non-working non-residents, or both, only fail because of the charity of citizens. Flynt also criticizes states where the failure to rid tramps consists of the law as opposed to the citizens. Nearing the end of his assessment of tramps and eastern penal practices, Flynt notes the failure of the jail systems of both Ohio and Indiana, but he also locates a separate deterrent for tramps, that of the local residents. The well-known practice of the community-sanctioned "'timber-lesson,'" for instance, consists of a "clubbing at the hands of the inhabitants of certain towns" (99-100). Basically, tramps are located in a resting spot (probably a jungle) and are then chased, pelted with rocks, and beaten with sticks by male residents until the end of the town line. Flynt's own experience of the timber-lesson resulted in one of his "fellow sufferers" being hospitalized "for some time"; another "had his eye gouged terribly," and Flynt imagines that these tramps "will never visit that town again"(100).[21] While Flynt admits that the timber-lesson may be considered "very crude and often cruel," he also argues that the practice "is one of the best remedies for vagabondage that exist[s]" (100). Flynt, then, focuses on the reform of not only the tramp, but of American citizens, the law, and penal institutions. His writings methodically demonstrate how only discipline will rid the country of its opposite, the tramp body.

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[21] Flynt, however, escaped the "scrape" with only a "sore back" (100).

In "What the Tramp Eats and Wears," Flynt continues to awaken the American public to the abuses and misuses of the institutions responsible for public safety and community welfare. The author recalls a particular "fad" of trampdom he witnessed on the road, that of "calling on the penitentiaries for clothes" (105). Flynt describes his memory of a tramp entering Fort Madison "pen" with "clothes not only tattered and torn, but infested with vermin," who later emerged from the jail hardly recognizable because "he was so well dressed" (105). In this specific article, Flynt calls particular attention to the cost of the tramp—a result of the malfunctioning of prisons and charitable citizens—that is inflicted upon the American citizenry as a whole. In a familiar Flynt-style, the article begins with the matter-of-fact statement that "the tramp is the hungriest fellow in the world. . . . his appetite is ravenous," and then continues with the strategic, yet ever-so transparent, technique of complementing such a statement with his own personal experience: "even riding on a freight train for a morning used to make me hungry enough to eat two dinners. . . . no work has ever made me so hungry as idling" (137). Flynt begins this article with an oxymoronic reference to *idling* as *work*, a sure taunt for readers versed in binary logic and concerned about the parasitical denizens that threaten their property, as well as the economic stability of the nation. Known by the public as a disguised tramp, and having produced a series of articles on trampdom that reveal the criminal practices of the tramp formerly unpublished, Flynt is granted license to alter his subject position and maintain authority by an audience that knows full well that, by the article's end, the offensive oxymoron will once again settle into its polar

opposites. In other words, the privileged citizen will be deemed the victim of the tramp.

Continuing to reinscribe the lack of effort of the tramp towards work, Flynt adds a clear (and loaded) comparison that "the tramp can usually eat nearly twice as much as the laboring-man of ordinary appetite" (137). Referring back to Halberstam's mapping of monstrosity and Flynt's own professed interest in the study of human parasites, one cannot help but recognize the production of the tramp, here, as the national monster that consumes but refuses to produce. Not only does he consume, he consumes excessively—twice as much as the ordinary. As Halberstam has demonstrated in both literary and cinematic constructions of the national monster, the parasitical element and that of live burial are noted elements of monstrous Othering. And Flynt's work accentuates such features; not only is the tramp constructed as *buried within* the nation, state, and community, he, likewise, *feeds off of* the industry of the productive citizenry.

According to Flynt, "although the tramp hates honest labor, he hates starvation still more" (142). The tramp's level of indolence, however, determines his meals. If too lazy, such as the "poke-out beggar" (139), he satisfies himself with cold handouts from the backdoors of local residents. Depending "largely on the kind of house he visits" (139), the tramp may receive as much as "coffee, a little meat, some potatoes, and 'punk 'n' plaster" (140).[22] Flynt continues his typology with "the lazy beggar" who frequents saloons, as well as the backdoors of residents, and typically receives cold sandwiches and "now and then a cold potato will be put into the bundle . . . and occasionally, a piece of pie" (140). Still

[22] Bread and butter. (Flynt *Tramping with Tramps*,140)

there is the "hot" "set-down" meal that "is befriended mainly by the persevering and energetic" (138). These meals are begged primarily by *the hobo-type*, who possesses the characteristics "that win his way with strangers and draw their sympathy and help" (139). Allegedly, these types beg so well that they typically eat "good solid meals three times a day—or oftener" (138). Flynt, later in this same article, returns this tramp-type and adds that, besides three square meals, this tramp's diet often consists of an additional "two or three lunches a day" (153). Intensifying the tramp's excessive and parasitical nature, Flynt states that the tramp who begs several meals does not always eat them, but "throw[s] them away" (153), or he gives the edibles to another, "often a seeker of work" (153). And the author adds, "although the tramp hates labor, he does not hate the true laborer" (153). Flynt strategically places this particular dependent clause—although the tramp hates [honest] labor—directly after representations of the public. In the first instance, the emphasis on the tramp's hatred toward work follows a patronizing criticism padded with sympathetic understanding. Flynt states, "I know very well that people do not realize [that no tramp starves to death in the United States], and that they feed tramps regularly, laboring under the delusion that it is only humane to do so" (142). In the second reference, a representation of the male worker follows the dependent clause. Flynt writes that the tramp "knows only too well that it is mainly the laboring-man off whom he lives" (153). The employment of this dependent clause is followed by references to those citizens deemed good and proper, although a tad uninformed. The rhetorical strategy consists of a more intricate and power-based juxtaposition,

however, than merely that of the smarmy tramp and the ignorant citizenry. At odds, as well, are a hatred of work and a work ethic, for the repetition of the dependent clause—although the tramp hates [honest] labor—is followed by a reference to those who feed the tramps and are *laboring* under a misunderstanding that it is humane to do so, as well as the *labouring*-man off of whom the tramp knows he lives. I would argue that, not only does Flynt's rhetorical strategy polarize those who work against those who hate to, but, as well, it unites both genders of community to confront the tramp problem. While Flynt never specifies that it is women who most commonly feed tramps at residences, historically speaking the majority of women in the nineteenth century were allocated the private sphere of domestic practices, including the expectations of nurturing, and were, as well, depending on their class, significant members of charitable organizations. Considering this history and Flynt's gentle reprove on account of an ignorance of the public domain of the tramp, it is most likely that his reference is to women. In addition, his final sketch in this article consists of a recap of a dinner provided for him by a woman and her daughter. Flynt recalls, "And how they fed me! My plate was not once empty" (163). Therefore, Flynt sets up both the labor of women[23] and men of the United States citizenry against the tramp's lethargy. He also, ironically, grants a power-knowledge to the tramp. After all, it is the tramp who *knows* of his parasitical relationship to the working man, and it is the citizen's *lack* of knowledge and better judgment that perpetuates such illogical relations. What Flynt accomplishes is a construction of the tramp as

[23] Unfortunately, Flynt's reference to the labor of women does not refer to the various domestic work with which she serves the laboring-man, but rather her labor that is a direct consequence of her morality.

the master and the American public as his slave. He reverses the standard social hierarchy, resulting in a threat to national progress, which, in turn, exacerbates the repressed fear of instability already inherent in such an ideology. Rather than subjects capable of critiquing the current system of capital, Flynt's readers are the recipients of an epiphanic realization that they must reform their own practices or suffer a national financial disaster of a monstrous non-productive expenditure. For, as Flynt writes, "tramps are expensive" (165). He adds:

> I think it is safe to say that there are not less than sixty thousand in this country. Every man of this number, as a rule, eats something twice a day, and the majority eat three good meals. They all wear some sort of clothing. . . . They all drink liquor, probably each one of them a glass of whisky a day. They all get into jail, and eat and drink there just as much *at the expense of the community* as elsewhere. They all chew and smoke tobacco. . . . How much all of this represents in money I cannot tell, but . . . together with the costs of conviction for vagrancy, drunkenness, and crime, will easily mount up to the millions. And all that *the country* can show for this expenditure is an idle, homeless, and useless class of individuals called tramps. (165 emphasis added)

Flynt proposes to unite American citizens, communities, and their state and local penal systems in the struggle against the monstrous tramp who consumes excessively, yet produces nothing but his own kind.

In "Club Life Among Outcasts," Flynt opposes the cohesive charitable work of "neighborhood guilds and college settlements" that advocate for the "'fallen brother'" (89-90). Organizations supplying assistance to the tramps work directly in opposition to Flynt's plan for reform. Rather the author speaks of another type of "work" that "must be done by law and government" (90), a process of reform only these institutions can achieve. "Vice must be punished," he writes, "and the vicious sequestrated" (90). Particularly with reference to older tramps, Flynt advises that their meeting places be "destroy[ed]" and their inhabitants "punish[ed]" under "severe law" (89). But the most pronounced part of his plan of reform requires that tramps be "separated" (89): "the evils in low life are contagious," he writes. Until tramps are "dealt with separately . . . not much can be accomplished" (89). Flynt adds a mathematical slippery slope of reproduction concerning tramps in his assertion that two "outcasts" in the company of a "weak human being" will result in three outcasts, and only a few more "similar chances" of this type will result in "a gang" (89). Not only does Flynt reinscribe the tramp as that of contagion, but he uses this argument to advocate a divide and conquer strategy that will enable the tramp to be "quarantined and prevented from spreading," and as well to be "scientifically studied" (89). It is as though Flynt has read his Foucault; he is, after all, aware of the production of social networks between criminals of which Foucault documents. Flynt, however, in his pursuit of the engineering of the individual through discipline, also resorts to the study of science to take as its object the incarcerated tramp—exactly that with which he finds fault in previous writings.[24]

[24] Here I note back to the medical studies of the incarcerated criminal's physiognomy that Flynt

Regardless of his inconsistencies, Flynt's rhetorical mapping of reform speaks to at least one nineteenth-century plan to homogenize the American citizenry—the *carceral continuum* that reinscribes and legitimates such practices in discipline throughout a *civilized* nation.

**Further Answers to the Tramp Question**

Flynt professes to "believe that the reader will moralize and philosophize whenever necessary" (268) while reading his articles and sketches. Public writings regarding the Tramp Question, however, more often imitated and extended Flynt's philosophies of reform than challenged them outright. With regard to particular methods of reform, a few periodicals reprinted letters that disagreed with Flynt's perspective; these differences of opinion, however, primarily consisted of either the arguments of those in professions who felt threatened by Flynt's rhetoric or those who disputed the work initiatives Flynt recommends in favor of more corporeal punishment.

In April of 1896, for instance, G. A. Gerard of Golden, Colorado, replied to Flynt's assertion that "'nearly all tramps have, during some part of their lives, been charges of the State in its reformatories,'" and that "'the present reform school system directly or indirectly forces boys into trampdom.'" Gerard, superintendent of the State Industrial School of Colorado, denies emphatically

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finds reductive in that criminologists and medical professionals do not study the criminal in "his most natural state of body and mind." Besides measurements of criminals' physical frames, Flynt adds that these "volumes" include other useless, or at least ineffective, information, such as "the effect of various . . . diet[s] on [the criminal's] deportment, the workings of delicate instruments, placed on his wrists, to test the beat of his pulse under various conditions, the stories he has been *persuaded* to tell about his life, his maunderings . . . under the influence of hypnotism" (emphasis added, *Tramping with Tramps* 1-2).

"the assertions of Mr. Flynt." According to Gerard, Flynt bases his opinions regarding reformatories and trampdom on merely eight months experience tramping, while a fellow colleague of Gerard's and a superintendent of fourteen years claims that, having interviewed more than one thousand tramps over the past five years, "'only five claimed to have been in reform schools.'" Gerard further asserts that the statistics of reform school administrators consist of a more factual record in that this data continues to be gathered after the boy is paroled or discharged. Gerard cites "statistics thus gathered and kept" that report "that about seventy-five per cent. of those who are committed go forth [after discharge or parole] and continue [as] industrious, law-abiding, useful citizens." Included in Gerard's letter is a breakdown of the disciplinary technologies that allegedly enable such positive results: "Our boys average four hours a day in school and four at work." He adds, "we teach obedience, and enforce it; we teach and furnish useful employment. Each boy . . . is constantly employed either at work or in school, with proper allowance for healthful exercise and recreation. . . . in short, all of the work about the institution . . . except to lead and instruct" is allocated to the boys. What Gerard accomplishes in this article, then, is not a difference of opinion with regard to the work initiative that Flynt so adamantly promotes, but an argument that American reformatories *do* consist of the type of reform "Mr. Flynt describes" as needed in the fight against trampdom.

Gerard's description of the reformatory as a "hive of industry" adheres to what Foucault has mapped as the science of engineering employed by the nineteenth century. The breakdown of the reformatory's engineering by Gerard

charts the manufacturing of the individual most prominent at the time: spatialization, control of activity, repetitive exercises, hierarchies of power (only the teachers and officials may lead and instruct), and obedience, which suggests, as well, a regiment of normalizing judgments. The graduates of reformatories also prove to be useful citizens after their release, meaning they continue to work. Not only, then, are these boys useful as less-resistant laborers, they are also useful as statistics after their release from such institutions. It is safe to assume with reference to Gerard's statistics that the surveillance of their bodies and practices continues regardless of their having been released. Gerard's need to clarify the reformatory as a legitimate institution most likely results from the fact that, of the eighty-one institutions known as reformatories, reform schools, and industrial schools, the United States public invests "fifteen million dollars in lands and buildings for them, and pays annually more than four million dollars for their maintenance." Obviously Gerard considers Flynt's assertions not only incorrect, but financially threatening as well.[25]

Another response to Flynt's articles that should be noted here is that written by the Mayor of Indianapolis in March of 1895. C. S. Denny disagrees with Flynt with regard to remedying the tramp problem by incarcerating tramps in workhouses and penitentiaries. According to Mayor Denny, most states maintain very few workhouses, and those that do exist tend not to "furnish the amount and

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[25] Another response to Flynt's assertions regarding reformatories consists of a letter from A.Z. Hull, who writes with the assurance that there has been a "revolution" of reform schools. Boys and girls are no longer "penned up" behind bars, such as criminals, but are now the inhabitants of "the open, or cottage, system" that resembles a small town of houses in which the girls and boys sleep. Hull also states that, in regard to discipline, "humane methods now prevail"; instead of treating boys and girls like "confirmed criminals," an effort has been made "to reform them." Not unlike Gerard, however, Hull emphasizes the industrial training that all wards receive and writes that the "reform school of to-day does not fall far short of the school Mr. Flynt would establish."

kind of work to cure the average tramp." With regard to the penitentiary, however, Denny, unlike the blurring of boundaries Flynt promotes, makes a distinction between the tramp and the criminal and adds that "the penitentiary is intended for men of criminal instincts . . . not for idlers. . . . It is not a proper place to teach loafers habits of industry." Rather, the good mayor makes a case for "the whipping-post" as a substitute for costly incarceration. Denny anticipates the arguments of the "sentimentalist" and of his reading audience in general, but further argues that "the return to the lash" be considered a disciplinary method adopted by state legislatures. He writes, "After observing the effect . . . I do not believe the legislature of a single State would decline to sanction flogging as a punishment for cases of confirmed vagabondage." The mayor develops flogging as a constructive deterrent to trampdom by employing his own experiences in law enforcement as support for such an argument. According to Denny, while presiding over police court, he was given a "practical demonstration of the efficacy of the whip used upon the backs of roving hands of vagabonds." Apparently, a few years prior tramps had "overrun" the city of Indianapolis during the winter. The workhouses became overcrowded with tramps, and because of their monstrous numbers, the tramps actually drained the city of work to be accomplished, which then rendered the workhouse "just what the average tramp was seeking," a refuge from the cold, complete with three meals a day. Denny therefore changed strategies, ceased sending the arrested tramps to the workhouse and, instead, requested verbal commitments from each one to leave the city. This strategy proved useless. Denny states that tramps not only refused

to leave the city district, but were found lodging at the doors of station-houses or trespassing on private property. The mayor then instructed the police to no longer arrest tramps, but to "drive them out of town, using any force necessary." According to Denny, "the floggings were administered openly," and "it only took a few days to rid the city of every tramp." Likewise, "other Indiana cities followed [Indianapolis'] example, with like beneficial results." Denny argues that "sentiment should not stand in the way of stamping out this growing evil" of trampdom and argues that in at least one state the legislature demands lashings for wife-beaters.[26] It follows for Denny, then, that, first, vagabonds are no better than wife-beaters, so they should also receive floggings and, second, that the general public has never actually had a chance to consider such disciplinary action because the whipping-post "was discarded long before the modern tramp was heard of."

Denny's plea is to the reading and voting public to join with the law and offer "the force of an enlightened public sentiment behind the movement" to legislate or simply approve "trampism" as an offence to be punished by corporeal punishment. "The average tramp," writes Denny:

> would rather spend a year in a station-house than take one good flogging. I believe it is the best remedy so far discovered. . . . If every community had a public whipping-post for tramps, or if the industrious men and women in every city and town would back up the local constabulary in the free use of cowhides on these worthless vagabonds, I do not believe there would be left a tramp

[26] Delaware.

> of the present American type at the ushering of the twentieth century.

Not unlike Flynt, then, who works to unite the public with its legal system to defeat trampdom, Denny promotes unification between the state and its citizenry to grant approval for corporeal punishment. While Flynt typically argues for the reform of the tramp by way of nineteenth-century disciplinary engineering,[27] Denny resorts to the public display of pain in the form of the whipping-post as the answer to the tramp question. As Foucault has pointed out, the previous use of public pain and torture as a means of punishment eventually produced a resistance to such displays of aristocratic power in the form of an unruly public by the late eighteenth century. Denny's strategy, then, is to receive public support and, in turn, manipulate such disciplinary action to represent one of the community, as opposed to one mandated solely by government. "In fact," he writes of the apparently illegal floggings that were administered in the years previous, "public sentiment and approval took the place of law."

Other writers argue against the incarceration of tramps and maintain that the more retrospective employment of physical punishment be reconsidered in the nineteenth century as the primary method of curbing, if not curing, the tramp problem. In an article published in *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, the Honorable Horatio Seymour makes his case for the whipping-post rather than the workhouse or penitentiary and, ironically enough, supports his logic by arguing that the administering of the whip onto the bodies of tramps is far more humane

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[27] Granted, Flynt has argued that the timber-lesson administered in Ohio and Denny's state of Indiana is a fine deterrent for tramps, but the majority of his writings consist of the need to reform the tramp body from that of an idler to that of a worker.

than any form of incarceration. In the letter's end, however, the writer discounts both the penal system and the whipping-post as respectable methods, preferring Flynt's work initiative to both, but Seymour's arguments regarding physical punishment should be considered all the same as they reveal, I would argue, a residue of the disciplinary methods of aristocratic displays of pain, yet in need of community support.

According to the author, the jailing of tramps renders the prison a place that "breeds disease" not only harmful to the tramp, but to the "innocent persons" of a community who will also suffer from these "seeds of pestilences." Seymour cites England and its "jail fevers" that led to "the spread of epidemics" as an historical dilemma soon to affect the United States in incalculable numbers. The diseases of the tramp allegedly "give birth to pestilences which are carried into the families of the discharged convicts, or into the homes of *all classes of our citizens* in the clothing of the vagrant tramp made virulent by his unclean mode of life" (emphasis added). To prevent the national citizenry from falling victim to this monstrous miasma, Seymour highlights "the whip, that is far less dangerous to life and health than any other punishment." The whip's "effects are on the surface *where they can be seen*," adds the author, who believes that "medical men will agree" that "every thing used in [the lash's] place . . . has proved to be injurious to life, health, and intellect" (emphasis added). Seymour insinuates that the punishment of lashing as a disciplinary alternative will not only prevent the national government and public from investing more capital into the American penal system, but will also protect the citizenry and, as well, mark the tramp body.

That floggings render marks on the body, I would argue, is important to such an argument. While the author does not highlight the amount of cataloguing and record keeping that penal institutions perform with regard to tramping, such criminal records mark the tramp as a repeat offender and pursue him throughout his future. However, the tramp also maintains a type of resistance to this penal cataloguing in that he often, if not always, fabricates the information given. In essence, then, with the substitute of the lashing for incarceration, the tramp's body continues to be marked, but without the space of resistance formerly available. Any physical scarring on the body of the tramp thwarts his ability to fabricate his former existence and, likewise, enables officials to distinguish such a history at a mere glance. Seymour's fleeting recommendation that flogging replace incarceration, then, proves economically sound.

The discursive productions of the tramp render such arguments as Seymour's cost-effective and, therefore, logical. The tramp body engenders fear in the reader and, in turn, the reader considers physical reprimand as an answer to the Tramp Question. The public production of the vagabond class correlates the actual bodies of tramps with the likeness of diseases of epidemic proportions, leading to an understanding that these bodies, like disease, need be contained. When modes of containment come under fire for an actual proliferation of the contagion, however, methods, such as the lashing of tramps that leads to their alleged quick disappearance, surface and produce the perception that the community is contained and, in turn, protected from such contagion. Another such tactic used, without any physical pain inflicted, speaks to this same idyllic

production of the safe community. The Tramp Chair,[28] designed by Sanford J. Baker of Oakland, Maine, for instance, surfaced in the late 1880s as a device to deter tramps from inhabiting particular towns. The chair consists of "a cage" made of "two and a half inch strap steel riveted together in the shape of a chair. The front pieces are hinged so a person can be placed inside, and there is a hasp mounted so the device can be padlocked" (DeLorenzo 12). The chair is mounted on a frame complete with four wheels and a drawbar for towing. According to the Bangor Historical Society, municipalities used Baker's chair[29] as a form of public humiliation. Newcomers without jobs were placed in the chair and paraded about town on public display. Following this parade of humiliation, the ensnared tramp was rolled to the town line and dumped from the chair and told never to return. Methods, such as the Tramp Chair and public lashings, promote a false sense of security for community members who fear the contagion associated with the tramping problem; the calming results are visual and brief, but the homogenizing message extensive. Only once removed from the public displays of pain popular before the end of the eighteenth century, these nineteenth-century disciplinary tactics employ public display and/or physical abuse as not only a deterrent for tramps, but as visual proof of a community's homogenization.[30] Unlike the

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[28] DeLorenzo, who cites the Bangor Historical Society, states that the number of these chairs made and distributed by Baker is recorded at fifteen. DeLorenzo also notes that only two are currently known to exist, one at the Smithsonian, the other at the Maine Police Department Museum in Bangor, Maine (13).

[29] For his invention of the Tramp Chair, Baker received a medal that consisted of an engraved twenty-dollar gold coin. He received this medal from the town of Oakland for his "contribution to his community" (DeLorenzo 13).

[30] In an article by John A. Bolles published by *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1865, the author describes the whipping-post in the New England village of Pleasant Valley as a mere symbol of the past and, therefore, insinuates national improvement. Bolles writes of his visit to Pleasant Valley where the whipping-post still stands in the center of the village, but is now a

tactics of the eighteenth century, however, these disciplinary strategies have the support of the local citizenry.

To fear any contagion, of course, is to fear its reproductive capacity. Continuing with reference to Seymour's letter above, complementing the tramp and his communicable brethren is the contagion of crime itself. Like Flynt who argues that tramps must be separated in order to be reformed, Seymour argues that the administering of the whip also prevents the reproduction of tramp bodies. Packed with tramps, jails consist of a "moral leprosy" that, if left uncontained, "set[s] in motion the army of tramps" that will render all "property unsafe." Seymour draws specific attention to the youth incarcerated who will become more like the old and hardened tramp because of their shared proximity in the penal system. The demise of the youth is certain, and a slippery slope of criminal activity follows: "vagrancy, petty thefts, and disorders lead to murders, arson, and robbery." Like any contagion, trampdom engenders fear in its ability to multiply and spread. The most popular ideas regarding the containment of such a disease consist of dismantling the tramp network and, in the process, disabling its ability to reproduce in its own image; objectifying and marking the individual bodies that spread the contagion in order to recognize and locate them, as well as use them for public visual instruction of the reprimands for heterogeneity; and, finally, to

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whipping-post "only in name, serving merely as a peaceable bulletin-board, whereon were posted probate notices and venue advertisements." That the recycled use of the whipping-post consists of "merely" legal announcements of forfeited property, for sale at public auctions I find significant. Rather than being torn down and replaced, the whipping-post remains at the center of the quaint New England village. There, it is surrounded by institutions of discipline, namely "the churches, [and] the school-house," that, according to Foucault, employed the engineering of the individual in the nineteenth century. Its presence, then, signifies a more kinder, gentler America, if you will, by juxtaposition and comparison to the more inhumane practices of discipline practiced in a former, less civilized nation.

reform the tramp into a useful part of the citizenry, or in other words, make him a worker. For even Seymour, who argues the positive effects of the lash over incarceration, in the end of his letter, opts for "mak[ing] them do some useful work, such as breaking stone."

As Halberstam insists, monsters consist of "meaning machines" in that they represent, not only a distinct body that need be eliminated from local soil, but rather all Othered bodies and practices that threaten the homogenization of a national identity (21). It follows, then, that the tramp, produced as monstrous in public discourse, be associated with Others who engender a socially-deemed uncontainable excess that threatens the nation's progressive agenda. William H. Wahl, Editor of *Manufacturer and Builder*, for instance, connects the tramp problem with the civil unrest associated with the *unemployed* laborer. Perpetuating the production of the tramp as infectious, Wahl maps a cause-and-effect relation between the "gangs of tramps and vagabonds" that marched to the nation's capital and arrived there on May 1st, 1894, and the increase in strikes, as well as the violence during those strikes, of the unemployed laborer. Wahl describes the march of Coxey's Army as a tramp mission that proved as dishevelled and unorganized as tramps themselves. According to the editor, the reason behind marching through Washington's streets and onto capital grounds consisted of a tramp method of "impress[ing] upon Congress the necessity of doing something or other no one seems to know exactly what," and, in the process, the tramps furnished an "evil" example "to the vicious and criminal class." Wahl cautions his reading public regarding their "careless tolerance" and

"disposition to laugh [Coxey's Army] away as a ridiculous affair" because of the potential of what "such demonstrations of lawless license may carry in their train." Wahl reminds his readership that, "directly upon the heels of the insane Coxeyite movement," was the violent strike of the soft-coal miners and cokers. His rhetorical catalogue of the strikers' violent behavior then follows:

> its attendant turbulence, riots, bloodshed, destruction of property, interference with commerce, and general defiance of law and order, is a far more serious subject [than Coxey's Army of tramps] for the consideration of all who have at heart the perpetuity of our civil and political institutions. . . . ten years ago such widespread and open contempt for, and defiance of, the law and the rights of private property . . . would have been checked in its incipient stage by the alarm which its earliest manifestations would have excited.

Wahl then argues that "these periodical upheavals, increasing both in frequency and in intensity," will render "the ownership of property" "a crime and the independent workman a criminal." Wahl's rhetorical strategy, here, engenders fear by developing an imagined reversal of the social hierarchy. Not unlike Flynt's tactic of manufacturing the tramp as versed in the knowledge of his own parasitical nature and the development of citizens as ignorant pawns in the tramp's scheme, Wahl inverts the social order in a slippery slope argument, the mere possibility of which engenders fear of the excessive Other spreading into legislative control. And at the root of all evil is, again, the tramp, or the "dangerous foe to the orderly and industrious portion of the community," who

should be arrested and made to perform "that most dreaded of all penalties, hard labor."

Included in the development of the tramp as a monstrous contagion in need of containment and extermination (for to reform is to exterminate) emerges, additionally, a significant discourse of excessive immigration as the original cause of such a national malady. Dr. Van de Warker's letter of 1876, referred to above, for example, not only includes the charting of the diseased brain of the tramp, but offers an argument for his excessive population as well. According to Van de Warker, during the overlap of the "romantic and the commercial" periods, Europe "poured out its swarms of adventurers and wanderers like vermin upon the virgin shores of the newly discovered continents." This excess of immigration brought with it those who "displayed the tramp's characteristic disregard for the rights of property," an effect of "older civilizations" that had reduced trampism to an actual "profession . . . with the signs . . . of a separate and . . . secret order of humanity." This "exodus" of Europe's undesirables leads Van de Warker to determine that the American tramp population should be considered "exotic." In England, "especially," writes Van de Warker, "do we find tramp blood in its purest strain . . . assum[ing] a strong race type, . . . seldom crossed with domestic blood." It then follows, of course, that the "steady, home-loving stock" of the United States reproduced with Europe's vermin outcasts, "the more marked qualities of the latter invariably coming to the surface as the ruling trait in one or more of the offspring." Oddly enough, however, Van de Warker suggests that Europe's "exodus of their over-grown tramp population" to the United States consists of

proof of the new nation's progress. While the tramp is "not a colonist," his immigration to the United States proves that the nation has reached "that state of material overflow necessary to make [the U.S.] attractive to the confirmed tramp." Because the tramp can only exist on the surplus of a nation, states Van de Warker, his massive immigration should be understood "as a tide mark in the current of our social progress, a sure indication that we are attaining the old world standard of civilization."

In another correspondence only a few years later, in 1878, Professor William H. Brewer finds the presence of the tramp population far less propitious. Citing immigration as "the greatest of all" sources of trampdom, the author argues that "the imported beggars and criminals will introduce another strain of bad blood into our native stock." The majority of Brewer's editorial consists of the histories of multiple countries over various periods of time, as well as the tactics used by rulers to rid their lands of "the predatory and vagabond class." Brewer cites England under George III as a time when those of "the lower orders" were "carried off every month to execution" in "cartloads" in an attempt to destroy "those who were believed to be unfit for true civilization and stood in the way of its progress." Brewer states that this "method" was "deemed to be a failure" in that it did not "cure the evil," but then asks his audience "Was it a failure? Would our present civilization have been possible had there not been some such weeding out and keeping down of the foes of civilization?" In his attempt to argue for the purity of race, Brewer cites "the Jews" as a "thorough-bred tribe" that has "undergone this weeding in one country or another for more than thirty centuries"

and, in turn, represents a self-sufficient race whose religion has made begging dishonorable, but whose "sick and unfortunate are humanely cared for by themselves." The Jews, in turn, are compared to the likes of tramps who compose "a tribe of savages," and like "all tribes . . . has its foundation in heredity." Brewer insists that the charitable methods of Christianity have actually fostered the tramp tribes, but what the religion "can do for the general reclamation of these Arabs of the cities and Apaches of the country, these savages of our civilization, it has yet to show us." Not unlike Van de Warker's regressive hypothesis, Brewer also insists that "in the march of progress" of the nation, there exist men unable to keep pace, resulting in "stragglers" and "savages" that "hang on" by "dressing in [the nation's] cast off clothes, eking a subsistence out of the new condition of things but retaining the instincts of the old." Like "Indian savages," writes Brewer, the tramp tribe "cringes and begs, stealing a little when it can be done safely, ever ready to suddenly swoop down and destroy, plunder and murder" the "neighboring settlement of peaceful, industrious, civilized whites." Brewer, in this passage, racializes the tramp population; transients are associated with the native American and the foreign Arab. Brewer's strategy of associating the tramp with natives and foreigners, in that the tramp's sense of community consists of the tribal and, therefore, primitive structure of natives, as well as his reproductive reliance and origin consisting of that of immigrants, strips the tramp of his American citizenship, at least figuratively. Developed as a figure that emulates the primitive and reproduces the ills of the foreign, the tramp represents both the parasite of live burial and the foreign threat to nation and civilization.

In the article's end, Brewer cites the years between 1845 and 1865 as that period in United States history that "incited migrations of the poorer classes to an extent never dreamed of before," and argues that seven million more immigrants have arrived in New York since. "To say that a million of these landed destitute, and that half a million had been either paupers, beggars, or criminals in the Old World," he writes, "would be to state the unpleasant truth too mildly." Brewer, then, produces the tramp population as a foreign contagion uncontainable and demands the closing of the nation's borders. He, likewise, insists on a eugenics proposal—*a weeding out* of those incapable or unwilling to assimilate into an American commercial culture of private property and economic class differential—to rid the nation of tramps already within U.S. borders. The savage tribes of tramps that threaten and/or attempt to thwart civilization, writes Brewer, "must yet be met and conquered," and if not will be left "to breed unchecked, and to prey upon the industrious. . . . this tribe must be throttled, or it will throttle us!"

Brewer appropriates the *American-ness* of the tramp. By emphatically historicizing the tramp as a product of foreign origin, the author locates this particular tribal disease as a contagion only containable by its exclusion from U.S. borders. As a foreigner, the tramp represents a threat outside the nation, as well as one of live burial located in the towns unrestrained or incarcerated and, therefore, able to infect. Like Seymour, who advocates for public lashings, and Baker, who employs the Tramp Chair, as methods of ensuring the safety of a particular community, Brewer promotes the examination of immigrants and extensive border control as a guarantee for national homogenization. The method

of exclusion used by Brewer represents an extension of those advocated by Seymour and Baker, however. Methods, such as public lashings and parading a tramp, emphasize the microcosm of community only, in that these practices allegedly lead to the tramp's disappearance and, as well, the safety of local citizens, but only from the particular community in which they are practiced. To displace the tramp to another location simply represents a method by which the national body remains infected. Such writers and inventors of reform as Seymour and Baker, while mapping the tramp as a threat to community, an outsider to a particular locale, do not strip him of his American heritage, so to speak, but do appropriate his mobility—the right to cross town lines and borders without proof of work and residency. These community practices define and promote *American-ness* as the responsibility of the tramp; it is his failure at being an American, in other words, for which the tramp is punished. Brewer, on the other hand, by developing the tramp as also a foreign threat to the nation, denies the tramp his identity as an American, which, in turn, disavows the unemployed wanderer's right to remain on native soil. Not only, however, does Brewer promote the exclusion of tramps from inhabiting the nation, but for those already inside the nation's borders, his reiteration of the method of eugenics, or the *weeding out* of undesirables, as a questionable failure in history more than suggests his support for an extermination of those he defines as incapable or unwilling to support the progressive agenda of a civilized nation. By grouping tramps with *Indian savages*, as opposed to national citizens, Brewer produces the

tramp as yet another presence of the primitive that, like the Native American, if not subjugated, then need be exterminated.

**Dominant Discourse Summarized**

In mapping the American hobo, I have concentrated in this chapter on the shift from hobo to tramp and the more popular answers to the Tramp Question in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. With the collapse of Jay Cooke and Company in 1873, discourse shifted at the site of the hobo—once the celebrated rugged individual to that of the lazy denizen. Like the monster that Halberstam argues signifies an economic representation of national Others, the discursive productions of the tramp represented all transients. Constructed as a contagious disease capable of spreading throughout the United States, the tramp represented a *regressive resistance* to linear history in need of containment. Reform discourse regarding the tramp ranged from work initiatives to the humiliation and the violent marking of his body, as well as his complete extermination. As opposed to critiquing industrial capitalism as a hierarchical system that requires unemployment in its production of surplus value, dominant discourse manufactured the difference of tramps when juxtaposed by the idyllic citizen and, in turn, constructed the idyllic citizen in opposition to the tramp. In mapping these discourses of knowledge and their material manifestations, my objective is to disarticulate the hobo from his commonly assumed mythology and to note his history as an exploited feature of the industrialized American landscape.

## The American Hobo: Counter-Dominant Discursive Production

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century objectification of the hobo as the tramp and the tramp as a monstrous threat to U.S. nationalism rendered all transients the economic Other. However, as Michel Foucault has suggested, the naming of typologies not only objectifies and taxonomizes bodies, but also renders a place from which they may speak. The following chapter maps various reactive constructions of the hobo and the tramp—counter-dominant discursive productions that gained recognition predominantly in hobo organizations. The International Brotherhood Welfare Association celebrated the hobo in its newspaper *"Hobo" News*, for instance, but in its resignifying practices, the organization also employed the same binary logic used in dominant discourses and, as well, dismissed the hobo's desire to move. In addition to the organization of the hobo, I consider the writings of Jack London as a hybrid of dominant and counter discursive productions of the hobo and tramp—a construction that speaks specifically to the hobo's agency denied in labor agitation rhetoric. Also discussed in this chapter are hobo and tramp artefacts that, as objects used in exchange, reveal the communal dimensions of the hobo and offer a different version of the hobo aggregate than that of the more popular press. This mapping of both dominant and counter-dominant discursive productions of the hobo actually reveals the complexities inherent in such an historical figure.

**Public Resistance**

Not all citizens concerned with the tramp accepted the dominant-discursive productions or the methods of reform from government, medical, and sociological self-professed experts outlined in the last chapter. Some public discourse argued the cause of trampdom to be a result of the tramp's environmental surroundings, particularly the saloon, while labor agitators mapped the system of industrial capitalism the culprit.

In November of 1896, for instance, *The Century* published a letter from Reverend Demetrius Tillotston of Frankfurt, Indiana, in which the author "expresses dissent" from the whipping-post as a method of reform. In regard to laws that render vagrancy a crime, Tillotston argues that only if "employment . . . that would enable the individual to secure food and shelter" were available would this law be "practical." The reverend apparently recognized that not all trampdom was a result of a lack of will, but that a part of this social problem consisted of men unable to find work to provide adequate sustenance. Tillotston argues for "the establishment of food and shelter depots" where the tramp "is compelled to work before he can eat" as more "Christian, less expensive in the end to society, and far more effectual" than the whipping-post proposition. The reverend admits, however, that his remedy will not be effective "until the sources of supply are destroyed," for the percentage of tramps in the United States that "have been produced, either directly or indirectly, through the influence of the saloon" Tillotston puts at "80 percent." While the reverend's charitable scheme consists of a more humane method of discipline than that of carceral punishment, it is

interesting to note that the American tramp maintains the character of the loafer or idler who *must* work. In other words, Tillostston's recommendation maintains the work initiative promoted by Josiah Flynt and others; regardless of the plan's structure—the food and shelter depot—the exchange *demands labor*. In this respect, Tillostston's understanding of the lack of work itself as engendering trampdom falls short when considered alongside his plan of action. His more liberal strategy neglects to critique the material reality of economic panics and depressions that have caused the surge in trampdom and, instead, reiterates the emphasis of labor as reform.

In an article published in *The Alarm*, however, Lucy E. Parsons speaks directly to the American tramp and advocates the overthrow of capitalists. She defines her audience as "the 30,000 now tramping the streets" of Chicago and asks that they listen to her charges against the "great land of plenty." Parsons diverges from Flynt and others in her definition of the tramp; she acknowledges trampdom as the result of the "bosses," who place industrial profit above the meagre wage of workers. In essence, she reappropriates the term tramp and recasts it as the result of industrial capitalism. Parsons recaps the work schedules of ten, twelve, and fifteen hours that tramps once performed while "harnessed to a machine" of steam that produced the wealth of the nation. She adds that the former workers' "employer[s] saw fit to create an artificial famine by limiting production" which led to those workers being "turned upon the highway a tramp, with hunger in [their] stomach[s] and rags upon [their] back[s]." According to Parsons, employers consist of those who have told these former laborers "that it

was over-production" that had lost them their jobs. These same bosses do not care that the worker has been "execrated and denounced as a 'worthless tramp and vagrant' by that very class" to which the bosses belong.

Parsons renames the bosses "arrogant robber[s]" and warns that these criminals will argue that the tramp "drank up all [his] wages . . . and that is the reason [he] [has] nothing now." Likewise, the "robbers" will argue that the tramp "ought to be shot." And Parsons also warns of the "hypocrite" who will prefer to understand the tramp's poverty as "ordained of God." She also anticipates the possible internalization of such rhetoric and its ability to affect the unemployed transient. She requests that, under both the economic hardship and the "mockery" produced by the ruling class, the tramp not take his "own hand to take [his] life," but instead take a "stroll . . . down the avenues of the rich and look through the magnificent plate-glass windows into their voluptuous homes. . . . here [the tramp] will discover the very identical robbers who have despoiled" him. She further advises that the tramp's "tragedy be enacted here" at the house of the rich, where the tramp should speak to "these robbers in the only language which they have ever been able to understand, for they have never deigned to notice any petition from their slaves that they were not compelled to read" without warfare. Parsons argues against tramp organization, but argues that "each of you hungry tramps who read these lines, avail yourselves of those little methods of warfare which Science has placed in the hands of the poor man, and you will become a power in this or any other land." The article ends with an underlined directive: "<u>Learn the use of explosives.</u>"

Such articles as Parsons' spoke back to the dominant discourses regarding the tramp, but also fuelled the hysteria associated with the tramp as a violent and vicious savage. For while these radical newspapers, such as *The Alarm*, had a limited circulation in that they were primarily produced for and purchased by members of the working class, these publications were also under surveillance by government officials troubled by the agitation the media was thought to incite. Prosecutors used this particular article of Parsons, for instance, in the Haymarket trial against her husband, Albert Parsons, to find him guilty for inciting the riot at Haymarket Square in May of 1886.[1] Such radical rhetoric represents the burgeoning of underground newspapers that materialized in the late-nineteenth century. Particularly in response to the labor disputes of the time, radical activists and labor agitators produced newspapers that promoted a Marxist understanding of dialectical materialism that, in turn, recognized and accentuated the class struggle of the proletariat. These periodicals rewrote the production of the hobo, altering his make-up from one of tramp monstrosity to one of Hegel's slaves complete with the master's tools.[2]

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[1] During a strike at McCormick Reaper Works factory, locked-out union members holding out for an 8 hr. workday began a riot with their replacements. Two men were killed. On May 4, a few thousand of these strikers gathered in Haymarket Square in a peaceful assembly to protest the murders of the two strikers. Police confronted the assembly and asked that it disperse. At this point *somebody* allegedly threw a bomb into the police ranks. The police then opened fire. Albert Parsons, as well as other known agitators, were indicted for the murder of officer Mathias J. Degan—a result of the altercation. The agitators were not prosecuted as perpetrators of the crime, but for instigating the violence. Parsons was found guilty and was executed by hanging on Nov. 11, 1887. (See Chicago Historical Society web-page.)

[2] I refer here to Hegel's master-slave dialectic known to have influenced Karl Marx's dialectical materialism. Labor agitators cited in this chapter often employ master and slave as opposed to capitalist and proletariat.

**The Counter-Attack: Organizing the Hobo**

Especially by the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, several radical weekly and monthly newspapers circulated throughout the United States,[3] but Nels Anderson argues that, by the 1920s, the *Industrial Solidarity* and the *"Hobo" News* particularly reflected the American hobo. While the only superficial differences between the *"Hobo" News* and *Industrial Solidarity* consisted of page length, circulation, and, in the case of the *HN*, the inclusivity of some hobo art, the organizations responsible for publishing each newspaper varied considerably.

According to Anderson, the International Workers of the World,[4] owners and distributors of *Industrial Solidarity*, was formed in Chicago in July of 1905; the organization was conceived of on the Main "stem"[5] of Chicago and maintained its headquarters and conventions in the city because Chicago consisted of a transportation center and, as well, maintained a "tolerant attitude toward street speakers" (230).[6] The I.W.W. appealed to the hobo because the

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[3] Anderson notes particularly the *Weekly People*, the *Truth*, the *Industrial Solidarity*, the *Worker*, the *Hobo News*, the *Liberator*, and the *Voice of Labor* (186).

[4] In this chapter I speak only of The International Workers of the World organization—to be further referenced as the I.W.W.—during the early-twentieth century. The organization persisted throughout the twentieth century and continues into the twenty-first.

[5] The Main Stem of Hobohemia in Chicago consists of West Madison street, where hobos predominantly congregated during the day after they had returned with a "stake," or pocketed money, from a job recently quit or ended. According to Anderson, all major cities have a main stem for hobos. The stem typically consisted of an area where the hobos could always find a "cheap" restaurant, mission, cigar store, "cheap hotel," gambling house, drug store, saloon, and a used clothing store (15).

[6] Anderson admits that the I.W.W. "enjoy[ed] a freedom" in its activities not found in most cities other than Chicago. He argues that the tolerance found in Chicago was a result of the I.W.W. being most "active" on West Madison Street, "virtually isolated from other parts of the city." Likewise, what Anderson refers to as the Wobblies' "battle ground of organization" consisted of

organization "preache[d] the gospel of struggle and revolt. It [wa]s opposed to compromise and reconciliation" (234). Each member of the I.W.W. was expected to be an agitator, "to sow seeds of discontent and to harass the employer" on the job (234).[7] I.W.W. strategy consisted of multiple tactics to organize all workers against the employing class. The organization offered both a critique of and an answer to the prevailing class system, particularly noting in the preamble to its constitution the impotency of trade unions that simply "'allow one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry'" (qt. in Anderson 233).

The primary objective of the I.W.W. consisted of organizing workers along "industrial lines" as opposed to the trade unions already in place—to "substitute, for trade unions, industrial unions for all the workers in one industry" (Anderson 231). The I.W.W. argued that, only by organizing all workers of the same industry, could the working class dismantle the surplus labor factor—a facet produced and relied upon by industrial capitalism to perpetuate its reproduction. For the overall plan of the I.W.W. industrial union consisted of "all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, ceas[ing] work whenever a

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"yearly wars" between the I.W.W. and the "farmers in the harvest belt, the lumber barons of the northwest, the contractors, the mine operators"—"all . . . remote from Chicago" (235).

[7] Particular I.W.W. members were considered "'investigators,'" states Anderson, who consisted of men chosen to produce an air of discontent among workers at a particular work site. These investigators, typically fired from the job for obvious reasons, were then followed by what the I.W.W. referred to as a "pioneer organizer"—one responsible for attempting to start an I.W.W. local union at the job site. Anderson states that the pioneer organizer consisted of a "militant type" whose only objective was to arouse the men on a site to consider organizing, and, in the process, the pioneer was also "discharged" from the job. What then followed was the third stage of I.W.W. procedure, or what Anderson refers to as "the real organizer." This third planned-arrival at the job site consisted of an I.W.W. organizer who worked "cooly and quietly" with the workers, one who "persuade[d] and argue[d], but not in the open" until he had "won over the men and [wa]s ready to make a demand" (234).

strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all" (Anderson 233). The prevailing radical model of the I.W.W. consisted of not only an understanding of Hegel's master-slave dialectic and Marx's dialectical materialism, but an adamant belief in the linear progression of such models. The I.W.W. preamble reads:

> Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and machinery of production, and abolish the wage system. . . . It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old. (qt. in Anderson 233)

According to Anderson, besides the mere rhetorics of a dialectical materialism that promised the overthrow of the current economic system, the I.W.W. also employed and advocated for "force and direct action" to meet these directives (236).

In direct opposition to the I.W.W., the International Brotherhood Welfare Association[8] employed education, as opposed to organized violence, as its chosen method to end industrial capitalism and the current class structure. The I.B.W.A., also founded in 1905, consisted of the brainchild of James Eads How, a local St. Louis millionaire. How, dubbed "The Millionaire Hobo" by hobos throughout the

[8] The International Brotherhood Welfare Association will be further referenced as I.B.W.A.

nation, allegedly became "dissatisfied with the ease and comfort of a rich man's life" and "left home and drifted into the group of hobos and tramps" (Anderson 236). Having witnessed for himself hobo trials and tribulations, How donated his inheritance to what he hoped would be a successful intervention into the hardships of all hobos. While the imaginative intentions of How and the I.B.W.A. consisted of organizing hobos internationally, Article III of the I.B.W.A. constitution speaks specifically to the organization's distinct program of socialism mapped for each I.B.W.A. member. In section C, for instance, all "'unused land'" is to be "'utilized . . . to provide work for the unemployed'"; section D consists of the objective "'to furnish medical, legal and other aid to members'"; section E, to "'assist [the unorganized] in obtaining work at remunerative wages and transportation when required'"; and section F, "'to educate the public mind to the right of collective ownership in production and distribution'" (qtd. in Anderson 236). These I.B.W.A. directives and objectives would lead to the abolition of "'poverty and [the introduction of] a classless society'" (qtd. in Anderson 237).

Fuelled by How's inheritance, the I.B.W.A. distributed money to all of its various sub-organizations, including the *"Hobo" News*, as well as a string of co-operative flop houses and hobo colleges located throughout the country. Anderson states that, as of 1923, How had already opened "hobo stopping places," or what How called "'Hotels de Bum'" in more than twenty American cities (238). While the I.B.W.A. owned a few of these flop houses, most were rented by the organization only during the winter months when the jungles no longer afforded the hobo an adequate resting place. Anderson describes one hotel

located in Cincinnati as typical of most: the building consisted of two-stories and was located in the "Hobohemian section of the city" (238). The second floor consisted of approximately forty cots where wanderers would sleep, and the first floor was divided into a reading room and a kitchen, where hobos could "boil up"[9] their clothes or make a "mulligan" (238).[10] Each hotel had a small wood yard to its rear so that wood could be split to maintain the stove and heater. The occupants of a *Hotel de Bum* selected a house committee responsible for maintaining the premises. On occasion members of this committee had to collect from residents a "small tax" during times when current expenses could not be met (239). However, a man who had no money was always welcome, but he had to contribute his share of the upkeep in order to stay. According to Anderson, only a few of these *Hotels de Bum* actually met their expenses; for those that did not, "the deficit generally [was] made good by How" (239).

Perhaps one of the most significant auxiliary institutions of the I.B.W.A. consisted of the Hobo College. Inspired by How and his unwavering commitment to education, the Hobo College actually involved several *colleges* located in larger cities that How hoped would one day "feed" into "a central hobo university" (Anderson 172). The term *college*, as employed by How and the I.B.W.A., signified an open forum design in which various debates and/or lectures took place during the winter months. Both the I.B.W.A. and the I.W.W. were known

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[9] Hobo speak for washing clothes, i.e., boiling garments.

[10] References to Mulligan stew are prevalent throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century writings by and about hobos. Most sources agree that the Mulligan is a product of the hobo jungles. Each hobo would chop up into pieces an edible item he had either stolen recently from a farm or was saving in his bindle for later and then put the edible pieces into a boiling pot of water located on jungle grounds. All the jungle hobos then ate the stew.

to rent halls for speaking opportunities, for listening to the soap box orator of the city streets in temperate weather consisted of much of the hobo's leisure time. According to Anderson, the I.B.W.A.'s Hobo College offered a greater variety of topics for discussion than did the meetings of the I.W.W. and, therefore, the Hobo College gained notoriety in cities, such as Chicago, where the college had been in operation, nearly each winter, since 1907 (226-227). The Hobo College agenda for most weeks consisted of usually one meeting per weekday and two on Sundays. During such meetings, either single orators or panels of speakers would address the seated crowd regarding such topics as socialism, the single tax, anti-war, and birth control.

Regardless of the attempts of the I.W.W. and the I.B.W.A. to organize hobos under the rubric of discontent, education and/or welfare, Anderson notes that "hobo organizations have never been a success" in the United States (247). While Anderson's definition of *success* in this instance remains far from clear, his arguments following this statement suggest that the *lack of success* of any hobo organization depended primarily on its reproduction of hierarchical and competitive models of management. Hobo organizations tended to mimic supposed democratic models of government and management that, in turn, reinscribed hierarchical power relations.[11] Anderson cites, first, the divide and

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[11] If one were to consider the design of the town meeting, where residents are able to vote for and to speak to a committee of local representatives regarding particular issues that affect all, one is better able to conceive of the forum of hobo organizations. However, one must also consider a town meeting where, more often than not, at least half of the members of the locale consist of different residents than in the previous meeting. Because of the hobo's continual movement from one locale to another, his arguments and demands put forth during one committee meeting were often never rearticulated again. The committee, however, more often than not, consisted of hobos who remained in one locale. These hobos were referred to as *home guards* by hobos and tramps who still moved. Home-guard hobos are discussed later in this chapter.

conquer strategies implemented within and between hobo organizations; the committees of the I.W.W. and I.B.W.A., for instance, consisted of "veritable battle grounds of contending interests" (247); he alludes as well to the "perpetual clash" within organizations, citing particular conventions and meetings of the I.W.W. and I.B.W.A. that perpetually "failed to accomplish anything because of jealousies and bitter feelings" (247). According to Anderson, one entire session of an I.B.W.A. convention in 1922 consisted of "a quarrel about the election of a chairman," and during the I.W.W.'s inception, entire days were spent "arguing whether the name of its chief officer should be that of president" (247-248). Anderson also argues that the lack of success of these organizations resulted from the hobo and his "suspicious" nature (248) and that the hobo's "suspicious attitude toward all organizations and persons in power is not altogether without ground" (248), considering hobos tended to "get the short end[12] of every bargain they dr[ove] with organized society" (248).

Further investigation into both the I.W.W. and I.B.W.A. reveals implemented disciplinary mechanisms that both promoted a binary opposition of *us vs. not us* and, in turn, often rendered the hobo a victim of these organizations. In the case of the I.W.W., for instance, uncovered is much more than simply *the shell of the old* mentioned in the Wobbly[13] preamble. The organization employed tactics of force, including violence, on many hobos, rendering one's membership

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[12] Anderson speaks here of the schemes of employers. Contractors were known to charge for the rental of boots and blankets at a particular job site. Likewise, private employment agencies tended to take money from hobos for jobs and the travel to such jobs, but when the hobo arrived at the designated work site, no job was to be found. Private employment agencies and contractors made a deal to offer as many jobs as possible, ensuring a work crew of adequate size and, as well, ensuring the employment agencies a greater profit from the money collected from all hired hobos, whether they had a job waiting at a particular site or not.

[13] Popular abbreviation/nickname for I.W.W.

in the I.W.W. a form of mere survival, as opposed to empowerment, in several instances. While Anderson concedes that the I.W.W. has represented the most popular of organizations to which the hobo belonged, he also dismisses Wobbly "spokesmen" who "boast[ed] of 100,000 members" in 1922 (231). According to Anderson, this membership number most probably consists of members signed up during the questionable summer campaigns directed by the I.W.W. organization. Actual members "in good standing"—those who had paid their dues of fifty cents per month—represent, most likely, only "a third or a fourth" of this number, states Anderson (232).

Anderson relates the strategies associated with the I.W.W.'s summer campaign for enrollment, including the circulation of narratives that threaten the non-member. While the I.W.W. as an organization "d[id] not officially sanction methods of intimidation," Anderson relates several common and widespread narratives in circulation in 1922 and beforehand regarding the I.W.W., including the organization's forbidding jobs under its control for any non-members and, to ensure difficult travel to non-I.W.W. jobs, throwing all non-members from freight trains in the midst of such travel (232). All I.W.W. members carried "red cards" to distinguish them from other transients (232). If a boxcar traveler were unable to produce the I.W.W. red card upon request, he was either made to sign-up and pay for a red card, or he was thrown from the train. Most hobos, then, whether wanting membership or not, bought I.W.W. "memberships for convenience only," but these paid associations seldom lasted over the summer months (232). In other words, many hobos "t[ook] out cards to avoid conflict" (232). Ironically, then,

the I.W.W., complete with a constitution that recognized the struggle of the working class, actually implemented the same practices that enabled the profits of the employing class, such as forcing hobos to surrender their money to remain on a train (as did railroad employees), manipulating the movement of hobos until they did pay (as did law officials), and throwing hobos from the freight cars (as did the private agencies, such as Pinkerton's, employed by the railroad companies).

The implementation of force, however, never consists solely of physical abuse. Considering the hobo's kinetic history of perpetual movement from job to city to job, etc., his primary access to information regarding jobs and bosses consisted of personal experience; reading the newspapers controlled by hobo organizations; and direct access to information gathered from other hobos in jungles, on the streets, and in freight cars. It is more than probable, then, that a combination of simply hearing about the disciplinary tactics employed by the I.W.W., along with an understanding of the organization's ability to control its press and job opportunities, produced a fear that rendered the hobo a discursive subject influenced by I.W.W. control. Not unlike the tramp reform motives of American business, government, and the public at large discussed in the preceding chapter, the I.W.W. sought to homogenize the hobo, at least in terms of membership, through discourses that promoted fear, perpetuated by policies of exclusion. In the process, the I.W.W. reinscribed hierarchical power relations—yet another hegemonic force of discipline that resulted, at best, in double jeopardy for unaffiliated hobos.

Arguably, the I.W.W. depended on financial support gained by membership dues, but even the I.B.W.A., supported primarily by the inheritance of How, promoted exclusion and, justifiably fear, in its seemingly supportive program for the disenfranchised. Anderson speaks to the "disadvantage" of the Hobo College open forum as being "not so accessible and hence . . . exclusive" when compared to the multiple soap boxes that edged Hobohemias in less inclimate weather (228). He also deems the speakers at the I.B.W.A. college "more select and less transient" (228). While Anderson does not state specifically that these auxiliary services offered by the I.B.W.A. existed solely for the organization's members, there is no other logical reason for such a lack of accessibility.[14] Likewise, the speakers of the college consisted of a *selected* group, suggesting that an I.B.W.A. member or committee was responsible for choosing each speaker. It is doubtful, therefore, that the speakers chosen consisted of the non-affiliated. In addition, the *lack of transience* associated with the speakers strongly suggests that they consisted of the locals of the I.B.W.A.—those members in good standing of a particular locale who had paid their dues in full. It is most probable that the auxiliary services associated with the I.B.W.A. consisted of welfare and educational opportunities for members only. When these members-only auxiliary services extend to include the Hotels de Bum that offered co-operative housing basically at no expense to residents, the plight of many hobos during the winter months who did not belong to the I.B.W.A. becomes even more apparent. In the *"Hobo" News* issue for October 1915, for instance, an

[14] Anderson never mentions that these halls ever filled to capacity because of their overwhelming popularity, for instance. He does, however, note the crowds of diversity present at BugHouse Square (9).

interview with William J. Quirke, manager of I.B.W.A. headquarters in Philadelphia, reveals that free lodging is available "for three days to any hobo who comes along." However, "after that he must become a member of our order."[15] Therefore, the I.B.W.A., while never known to use physical abuse to increase its membership, produced and reinscribed discourses of exclusivity under the guise of a socialist agenda.

Membership necessitates exclusivity, particularly when conceived within binary logic. It is understandable, then, that the I.W.W. and the I.B.W.A., in an attempt to organize, enticed itinerant workers by offering perks to members, and, in turn, privilege. Material resources and power were located with those who *had* membership, as opposed to those who *had none*. I would argue as well, however, that such a strategy resulted in yet another divide and conquer consequence that led to further divisions within the Hobohemias of any city and, therefore, the lack of success of these organizations of which Anderson notes. In essence, these organizations, while professing to be the voice of the working class, actually mimicked the have-and-have-not structure of the class struggle between the working class and the employing class in the form of member and non-member. After all, what such organizations as the I.W.W. and the I.W.B.A. actually produced, or at least perpetuated, was the local, or home guard of hobohemias—those former hobos who still worked itinerant jobs, but did so within the same locale. Many home guards, for instance, learned the language skills of the

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[15] "Hoboes' Association Opens Headquarters: Free Lodging for Three Days to Any Unemployed Worker Who May Apply."

soapbox orator from actually attending the hobo colleges.[16] These men would then litter a designated area within the hobohemia of which they resided. In Chicago, for instance, Anderson describes "Bug House Square"[17] as a section of the main stem where "transients . . . drifted together" to hear "the hobo intellectuals. . . . the thinker, the dreamer, and the chronic agitator. Many of its denizens . . . 'home guards'" (8-9). Anderson notes the home guard of any city consisted of homeless men who worked occasionally at various jobs in that particular city, but who also "seldom c[ame] to the attention of the . . . police" (96). While not all home guard orators claimed affiliation with either the I.W.W. or the I.B.W.A., many did. Anderson relates, for instance, that, out of the six speakers he listened to in Chicago on a Sunday in July of 1922, two were members of the I.W.W. and passed out the organization's literature upon dismounting the same box. At another outside open forum of speakers, Anderson quotes a bystander who notes a familiarity with the soap box orator: "'That man used to be with the I.W.W.; then he went over to How's organization'" (225). Anderson argues that "nearly if not quite one-half of the homeless men in Hobohemia are stationary casual laborers" (96). Regardless of any one speaker's affiliation or even lack thereof, it follows that the home guard of any one city

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[16] Anderson also gestures to former transient soapbox orators who joined organizations and, therefore, became more stationary residents. For instance, John X. Kelly had beaten "his way from city to city," had "been jailed many times for his 'soap-boxing,'" but "before [Kelly] met How, he *was* a curbstone orator." Anderson also notes that Kelly "ha[d] been associated with James Eads How for more than fifteen years" (173). I find Anderson's portrayal of Kelly interesting in that it speaks to one becoming an organizer and, therefore, less transient. Organizers did, indeed, travel, but typically to conventions, meetings, and rallies promoted by their affiliated organizations, as opposed to the type of travel typically associated with the hobo and what was deemed wanderlust, or his perpetual desire to move.

[17] Anderson argues that "Bohemia and Hobohemia meet" in this particular area where local philosophers merge with free-lance propagandists in a "polyglot population" that is hedged by the home guard soapbox orators who occupy the square's street corner edges (9).

actually comprised a large portion of stable I.W.W. and I.W.B.A. membership. After all, another reason for the *failure* of hobo organizations, notes Anderson, consisted simply of the "mobility of the hobo" (248). The hobo had no incentive for "fixed ownership and fixed residence" (248); he "safeguard[ed] himself" by perpetually moving (249). Obviously, the hobo's transience made for a less than ideal membership. Yet both organizations had been in operation for seventeen years at the time of Anderson's study in 1922.

The home guard of hobohemias consisted of either men who received "a small regular allowance to remain away from home" or those who had once hoboed, but then "settle[d] down" and maintained a stationary existence (Anderson 96), which differed immensely from the hobo who perpetually moved, had no fixed residence, and was, therefore, unlike the home guard, the first suspected of any local crime. Entertaining the notion that home guard members of the I.B.W.A. received its members-only benefits, as well as other advantages of a stationary existence, such as being known locally, which rendered odd jobs more plentiful and the law less so, unaffiliated hobos, or even those affiliated who had not the clout of stationary members, employed resistance in the form of language; they renamed these more privileged stationary types. Rather than refer to the locals as hobos, the term *home guard* was coined and used "contemptuously" by hobos and tramps (Anderson 96). Many hobos defined themselves against the home guard, using the intermittent local workers as that which was Other than the hobo, or *not hobo*, and, in the process, attempted to stabilize a hobo identity, as well as shift *value* from the home guard to the hobo.

After all, it was the I.B.W.A. and the I.W.W. that produced and distributed the rhetoric of a new social order, not the mythology of the open road adventure.

**Hobo Resignification**

Stephanie Golden notes that self-proclaimed hobos countered dominant discursive productions of the tramp with their own construction of the hobo. Represented by multiple genres, including autobiography, fiction, lyrical poetry, and, in particular, the editorial and letters to the editor, hobo rhetoric covered the pages of particular newspapers and pamphlets generated by smaller presses. In their own literature, hobos constructed themselves as "flamboyant, aggressive workingmen, 'with a sense of pride, self-reliance, and independence,' often politically radical" (Golden 135). Both the *"Hobo" News* and *Industrial Solidarity*, however, also consistently promoted and advertised for their respective owners, the I.W.B.A. and the I.W.W., and worked to persuade hobos to join their ranks, requested membership dues, and enticed hobos and home guards to sell newspapers.

Only one of several I.W.W. publications in the 1920s, *Industrial Solidarity*, according to Anderson, consists "of the most important [I.W.W. publication] as far as the hobo is concerned" (192). Produced by a publishing company owned by and located in I.W.W. headquarters in Chicago,[18] *Solidarity* consisted of a six to eight page weekly that contained hobo eyewitness accounts of strikes, rallies, and the police brutality that accompanied most. The paper kept hobos informed about those who had been incarcerated during such violent

[18] Equity Press.

strikes—the same men who would no longer be of interest to the more popular newspapers and monthly magazines, or what hobos named the "capitalist press" (Anderson 186). Each paper also published correspondence from the road written by hobos with whom a reader may be familiar, but Anderson argues that the most popular and practical way in which hobos used copies of *Solidarity* was as "lesson sheets" (191), for in each issue at least one article consisted of "an analysis" of a particular form of labor organization (191). In the issue circulated for the week of July 1st, 1922, for instance, the Wobbly paper analyzes and criticizes craft unionism.

The *"Hobo" News*, differed from *Solidarity* in that the I.B.W.A., located in St. Louis, owned and operated the *HN*, which consisted of sixteen pages published monthly. Published less often, but with more pages, the *HN* contained much of the same content as that of the I.W.W. newspaper, but included poetry, art and essays crafted by hobos and carried "no advertising"[19] in its issues (Anderson 192).[20] In the 1920s Anderson notes, "The *Hobo News* is one paper that the hobo writer likes to be identified with because it is more than a doctrinaire propagandist sheet" (193). The monthly publication, in other words, was thought to hold some literary merit. Regardless of genre, however, content consisted predominantly of anti-capitalist rhetoric in its most overt form. From the hand-drawn pictures and/or photographs that covered each issue's front cover

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[19] Magazines and newspapers considered "all cluttered up with a lot of advertising" were considered "blanket magazines" by many hobo writers. The implication here is that the media produced by what hobos deemed the capitalist press was best used for covering the body while sleeping. ("Memorial Day").

[20] I have found no reference to *Industrial Solidarity* containing advertisements, nor have I found any reference to the newspaper's condemning such a practice.

to the reports of riots and the advertisements for rallies and marches, as well as the lyrical parodies of national tunes, I.W.B.A. members filled the pages of this newspaper with a counter-rhetoric that held capitalism responsible for the wage and unemployment.

But perhaps most intriguing about the *"Hobo" News*, as opposed to other labor newspapers, is the word hobo within its title.[21] In 1915, the *"Hobo" News* hit the streets in a reappropriative fashion. According to a *HN* article published in May of 1915, How, noted as editor of the newspaper,[22] "admits that he doesn't like the word 'hobo,' but concludes: 'We have got it and we are going to make it respectable.'"[23] This particular article continues under the heading "Definition of a Hobo." The *HN* "declares the 'fools dictionaries are all wrong when they describe a hobo variously as a tramp, a vagrant, a vagabond, a vagrant workman, an idle, itinerant workman." Rather "the official definition [of hobo] . . . is derived from the first two syllables of the Latin words, 'homo bonis,' meaning good man." However, the I.B.W.A.'s definition ends here. There was apparently no reason to continue the taxonomy. Obviously, *good man* does speak back to the productions of the hobo that had rendered him an object of study of tramp

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[21] Interesting to note here is that, because of the discursive productions of the hobo as a tramp, the I.B.W.A. in 1922 had to rename the Hobo College in Chicago the "Brotherhood College" because "the owners of the property would not rent the hall so long as the word 'hobo' was connected with the I.B.W.A. movement" (Anderson, footnote 237).

[22] Anderson makes note that the I.B.W.A. nearly represents "a one-man organization." While How "entertains about democracy, he really holds the purse" to the I.B.W.A. According to Anderson, while How's inheritance was given directly to the Holding Committee of the I.B.W.A., his "right to impose his will upon the organization [was] ever present" (239) and that "complaints [went] to [How] more often than to general headquarters" (240). Anderson states that I.B.W.A. members attempted to sway How's opinions and, by extension, his money towards particular locals and auxiliary services, causing more divisions within the organization's membership. As editor of the *"Hobo" News*, it is likely that How made final decisions regarding the editing of particular pieces, as well as the newspaper's content.

[23] "Hobo News Out." (May 1915) How first made this announcement in the first issue of the *'Hobo' News*, the April issue.

typology and, in turn, a threat to national progress, but the generalization of such a definition, I would argue, also aided the I.B.W.A. in particular. Not only does the definition of *good man* act as a rhetorical reappropriating device, but by reappropriating the term hobo in such a generalized manner, the I.B.W.A.'s definition also worked as a device of inclusivity. By broadening the definition of hobo, the I.B.W.A. could enhance its membership. Ironically, while the I.B.W.A. reinscribed practices of exclusivity by way of membership complete with extended auxiliary assistance, the organization also strategically manufactured a definition of hobo that promoted an *inclusivity* as not to *exclude* any potential members. It is interesting to note, however, that the I.B.W.A. dismisses the tramp in its resignification of the hobo. It was Dr. Ben Reitman, an extremely popular member of the I.B.W.A., who clarified the difference between the tramp and the hobo. Reitman developed a taxonomy consisting of the hobo who moves and works; the tramp who moves but will not work; and the bum who neither moves nor works. The I.B.W.A. counter-production of the hobo, therefore, insists on his difference from the tramp, the popular canopy term employed by the American public for all transients. I would argue further, however, that the I.B.W.A. reappropriation of the term hobo actually (re)produced the hobo in terms of unemployment, which perpetuated the connection between the hobo and work as reform, not unlike the more public discourses against which the reappropriation took place. Of course, while socio-medico-journalistic discourse concentrated on reforming the hobo—one of many tramps—into a worker, the I.B.W.A. transformed the hobo into the unemployed worker, emphasized reform of the

social order, and held capitalism and the employing class responsible for the lack of jobs, the cut backs, the rhetoric of overproduction, and the lay-offs from which the good man suffered.

In the month of April, 1915,[24] an article by George Fenton, Secretary of the I.B.W.A. in Kansas City, entitled "Good Advice from the Firing Line" speaks to both the I.B.W.A.'s recruitment tactics, as well as offers further insight into the resignification of the term hobo. Fenton's article begins with "the time has come when the man without a job must get into an organization." Fenton then reprimands those members of the I.B.W.A. who have shirked their membership responsibilities, or have not paid their dues during the spring and summer months when they have "no more use for the I.B.W.A." He further explains that this "trouble with most of the members" has "trouble[d] . . . the I.B.W.A. for the last seven or eight years." Fenton then employs the fear factor, or the fact that "another winter is coming" and ends his article with a directive to send in "for a bundle" of the *"Hobo" News*. While "looking for a Master," readers should sell the newspaper "on the street corners of the towns or cities when [they] are hoboing." Fenton's article strongly suggests the use of the *HN* as a recruiting device—the wrist slapping reprimand followed by the patriotic duty to sell newspapers—for the I.B.W.A. The Kansas City Secretary's use of the term *hoboing* for such recruitment speaks to a particular production of the hobo and requires further consideration. Fenton's reference to *looking for a Master*, for instance, indicates that the author has an understanding of the Master-Slave

[24] Volume 1, Number 1, of April 1915 represents the first issue of the *Hobo News*. Archived at the St. Louis Public Library, this particular issue exists only partially. According to the Reference dept. at the S.L.P.L., only two pages of the original have survived.

dialectic promoted by Hegel that later strongly influenced Marx's theory of dialectical materialism. Rather than Master and Slave, Marx's theory employs Capitalist and Proletariat in a dialectic of class struggle that results in the linear production of a new social order. Fenton's use of Master, then, signifies the Capitalist, or the employer, and *looking for* represents the unemployed's search for a job—his seeking to exchange labor power for monetary resources. Fenton actually sandwiches "hoboing it around the country" in between the dependent clause "when you are out of a job" and preceding the gerund phrase *looking for a Master*. Such a construction not only denotes the association of the Master with the Capitalist, but also defines the gerund *hoboing* as a practice of *looking for a Master*. Fenton's use of such a term as hoboing in this article represents yet another example of the I.B.W.A.'s production of the hobo as the unemployed good man, or the victim of the capitalist system. The I.B.W.A. emphasis, however, remains on the *inability* to work as opposed to the *preference* not to.

A hand-drawn sketch labelled "The March of the Hungry Men"—an illustration of approximately twenty men lined up and seemingly waiting—and a poem entitled "The Ignorant Masses" comprises the cover of this first issue. The poet, Ted Robinson, speaks tongue in cheek to the lack of knowledge regarding multiple modes of reform by the "Social Uplifters" (1) who had gone "down to the slums to regenerate bums" (3). Robinson's poem of three stanzas considers quite sarcastically the plight of charitable organizers. In stanza one, the social uplifters had "washed . . . dressed . . . [and furnished] libraries" (5) and had even "prayed" for the "ignorant mobs" (6), but were overwhelmed by the "hateful, and

vilely ungrateful" (7) unemployed men who demanded "what they wanted was jobs!" (8). In stanza three, the ignorance of the charitable folk with regard to the economic conditions that produce the unemployed class render the social uplifters baffled by the unemployed's dismissal of techniques of reform that will homogenize them: "it's useless to aid them,/The brutes do not ask for reform" (18-19). Instead, the parodied speakers note of the unemployed, "all they want is a chance!" (24). This first issue of the *"Hobo" News*, then, sets up a resignification of both the unemployed worker and the charitable organizations of Hobohemia. By occupying the voice of charity organizers, or social uplifters, Robinson exposes the lack of understanding these social institutions have with regard to the unemployed, their distance from understanding the plight of the unemployed, and, in turn, their methods of reforming the unemployed as engendered by complete ignorance. The retorts of the unemployed—a job, a chance—resignify the unemployed as victims of the economic system, as opposed to loafers who will not work.[25] The poem is entitled "The Ignorant Masses" and refers back to the dominant discourses produced about the tramp, for it is the collective voice of charitable organizers who refer to the unemployed as "ignorant asses, the underworld classes," yet the ironic reversal of the privileged reformers as, indeed, ignorant and the unemployed as well-informed comes across quite clearly. This reversal, however, consists of a reactive approach; Robinson's poem, as opposed to a more proactive message, in resignifying also replicates the binary scheme. The poet's methodology simply switches, or exchanges, value

[25] Interesting to note here is that I.W.W. was resignified as an abbreviation for I Won't Work and/or I Want Whiskey by the public at large (Anderson 235).

from one typology to another. The cover's layout supports such a binarized opposition and shift in value. The sketch of the unemployed poor, for instance, is located directly *above* the poem that has produced the charitable organizations as ignorant. The cover's layout, then, reinforces the value of one affiliate over the Other.

The I.B.W.A. methodology of resignification tended to perpetuate the production of complete opposites and, as well, consisted of (re)producing the hierarchical terms inherent in binary logic. While Othering typically consists of the practice of the resourceful in that those in power provide discourses of knowledge to remain in power—technologies designed to repeat the performance of assigned value and, hence, power—the actual practice of Othering, I would argue, avails itself to any group, or individual, whether in a position of power or not. Or, perhaps, I should say the seeming power inherent in any discourse of Othering renders value dependent upon context. After all, shifting value by way of language does not necessitate altering epistemology, or ways of knowing. Rather, the practice can simply reinscribe an ideo-logics, or in the course of resignifying, actually enhance by way of methodology, the exact paradigm against which it fights. While reappropriating and resignifying a term consists of a promotion in value of the term itself, when couched in binary logic, that same promotion of value is accumulated at the expense of devaluing the opposing term, or any term that *is not*. As mentioned above, the I.B.W.A. defines the hobo as *not a tramp*, for instance. Still, the majority of the organization's rhetoric remains inside the binary of Master and Slave and, as well, emphasizes de-valuing the

employing class. In the dense space of power relations known as Hobohemia, the I.B.W.A. produced a monster known to as the Master class.

Alexander Law, Secretary of the New York I.B.W.A., for example, deems the capitalist the "parasite."[26] Law argues that the right to private property has simply led to the few "pirates" who have "monopolized the land," or stolen it to produce their own wealth at the expense of others. These few, writes Law, who "masquerade around as our first and foremost citizens," practice nothing more than "wholesale robbing and [the] slaughter of the innocents." Likewise, William J. Quirke of the Philadelphia office resignifies the capitalist as a robber, not unlike Lucy Parsons. "This ROBBERY," states Quirke, "takes the form of Rent, Interest, and profit. The Workers live and die in order that a privileged class may live in luxury."[27] He then further argues the illogics, or lack of reason, of a system that allows some to die in poverty while others "are millionaires even before they are born." Additionally, Henry A. White, in an article entitled "A Blessing or a Curse, Which?," redefines efficiency—the pride of Big Business—as "to exact the maximum amount of labor from the workers at the minimum cost to itself." White, as well, employs the image of the robber to further explain capitalism's *efficient* system: "Big Business robs Paul of dollars and pays Peter in pennies, doled out in the shape of charity." In yet another *HN* article, John X. Kelly recounts his discussion with Chief of Police O'Connor in St. Paul after the chief had broken up Kelly's street speaking engagement. According to Kelly, the street speaking had been thwarted because the I.B.W.A. member "roast[ed] small

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[26] "A Protest against Conditions."
[27] "The Dead Hand Down through the Ages."

business men." In other words, says Kelly, "we must stop calling them 'Cockroaches.'"[28] As well, in a letter to the editor, S. Schmoll compares the practice of cannibalism to capitalism, and redefines the latter: "Cannibalism subsisted on the flesh taken off his brother's bones. Capitalism subsists by withholding that which puts flesh on his brother's bones." Schmoll, as well, equates the capitalist with the aristocrat, noting that "Money [is] the essence of the aristocracy."

Not only do the writers of the *"Hobo" News* employ the same tactics as tramp reformers, but even the same metaphors, such as that of the parasite. Flynt blurs the lines between the tramp and the criminal, for instance, not unlike the I.B.W.A. members who resignify, or perhaps the better term is counter-signify, the capitalist as the robber. So, too, while no tramp reformer employs the word cockroach in reference to the tramp population, many, if not all, emphasize the inability to control the population of tramps and the fear associated with the tramp's ability to multiply rapidly. Likewise, some medical discourse, such as that of Dr. Van de Warker, argued that the tramp was not only a primitive type, but based the tramp's diseased mind on, among other Darwinian notions, aristocratic lineage. Schmoll's letter to the editor, as well, compares capitalism to the primitive practice of cannibalism and then equates the capitalist's essence of money to that of the aristocracy. As argued earlier, Halberstam outlines the production of monsters as inherently connected to the fear associated with live burial and parasitism. The I.B.W.A. employs both tactics to produce capitalism as monstrous. In yet another *HN* article, for instance, Ambrose Bierce states that,

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[28] "Agitators, Police and Mules: Free Speech in St. Paul."

if a man is unable to find work, the U.S. government "impose[s] the death penalty for his failure."[29] The law "sentence[s] him to starvation." Bierce resignifies such a system of vagrancy laws sanctioned by government officials as "a monstrous and shameful tyranny" perpetuated by capitalist interests and sanctioned by law.

The I.B.W.A.'s reactive course of action—Othering—consisted, first, of remolding the hobo into the more generalized description of the unemployed worker; then, of redeploying the binary of *us vs. not us* by resignifying or allocating this production of the hobo value by de-valuing its opposite. Few, if any, articles generated by the I.B.W.A. press consist of celebrating the figure of the hobo without condemning the capitalist. Not unlike the methodology of tramp reform that rendered the public the victim of the tramp, the *HN* showcases its hobos as "VICTIMS OF THE SYSTEM."[30] Granted, it could be argued that the I.B.W.A. actually reappropriated this methodology of the *capitalist press* for its own interests. Ironically, however, the organization's resignification of the hobo actually (re)produced the ideal product of tramp reform—a good man willing to work. This production of the good-man-willing-to-work victim was employed to educate the working class with regard to the systemic inadequacies of the capitalist social order. It consisted of a production, as well, that challenged more popular discourses of the tramp that argued for the disciplinary mechanisms that would reform the tramp into a citizen-worker. Differentiating the hobo from the tramp, I.B.W.A. discourse produced for the public a counter-version of the hobo

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[29] "The Right to Work."

[30] Cover page. Vol. 1. Number 6. September 1915. Full page illustration: Man standing against water tank. Steam train about to pass.

as *not a tramp*, but as a good man, a good worker, whose only reason for moving about the country without resources was due to his *looking for a Master*. The hobo's value, unlike the de-valued tramp, consisted of his *desire* to work, and his victimization when doing so. This discourse of bifurcation shifted the blame for excessive vagrancy, at least in the case of the hobo, onto the industrial capitalist system and, in turn, led to a discursive space of critique, which, also, according to Anderson, "satisf[ied] [the] fundamental need of the social outcast for status" (249). For while the hobo's "mobility and instability . . . unfit[ted] him for organized group life," organizations like the I.B.W.A. did offer the hobo a way to "regain his lost status," a medium in which to identify with others who voiced their "rebellious attitudes against society" (249). For the *"Hobo" News* critiqued several institutions of the capitalist system—religion, government, employment agencies, charitable organizations, and the military, to name only a few. In the words of poet Covington Hall, the I.B.W.A. "turn[ed] the old world over as a plowman turns the clods."[31]

Probably one of the most effective counter-discourses the *HN* promoted consisted of exposing independent employment agencies and their capitalist practices. Anderson notes that, in Chicago alone, there existed "more than 200 private employment agencies" on the main stem of Hobohemia in 1922; approximately fifty of these served the homeless man, but thirty-nine of the fifty consisted of fee-collecting agencies, or "commission agencies" (111-112). According to Anderson's study, the commission agency made its profit by

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[31] "US, the Hoboes." The full line reads: "We shall turn the old world over as a plowman turns the clods" (Stanza 8, line 6).

"charging a fee to the employer who s[ought] workers, or by charging a fee to the applicants, or by charging both" (112). Depending on supply and demand, the agency would raise the rate to the employer if workers were in need, or raise the price of the job if work were scarce. Despite this obvious exploitation, hobos frequented the private agencies "four or five times" more often as public agencies provided and supervised by government (115). Anderson states the reasons behind such a choice were, first, that the public agencies were not on the main stem of Hobohemia and, second, that the private agencies were located on the main stem and promoted their services by announcing jobs on colorful placards. The worker enjoyed "window shopping" until he had made up his mind, and the private agency was not "duty bound" to retrieve information about the applicant. Also, the private agency "carrie[d] a better class of jobs," meaning jobs out of state that offered the opportunity to travel (115-116). However, often the jobs sold to the hobo by the private agencies consisted of complete fabrications or, in several cases, an intentional overestimation of work required on a job site. Referred to as "labor sharks" (Anderson 113) and/or "employment sharks" (Kelly 2),[32] the private employment agency became a target of the I.B.W.A., as well as other labor organizations.

White outlines the scheme of private employment agencies in the October 1915 issue of *HN*. Allegedly, the agency and the employer split the fees collected from the hobo "fifty-fifty."[33] According to White, men hired must be fired as well, "as every change in the gang [of workers] means money in [the employer's]

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[32] "The Dainties at the Banquet."
[33] "Employment Agencies—Public and Private."

pocket." The quick turn-around of workers, as well, increased the agency's profit, for each new unemployed worker sent to the job site had to pay the same fee as the one fired. White also adds that the employer practiced "a legalized robbery" in that he charged the worker various fees, including lodging, boarding, "a compulsory hospital fee and in many cases an insurance fee," whether used or not and regardless of "how short a time a man work[ed]." "If he works a week," states White of the laborer, "he draws $9.00 less his board and fees, leaving him $3.00 if the employment shark's fee is also deducted." And the employment agency's fee, as well, varied "from a dollar to as high as twenty per cent of the first month's pay." Additionally, often after paying his fees to the employment agency, the worker discovered there was no job, "that the person or firm to whom he was sent never applied to the agency for help."

One of the most convincing pieces regarding the criminal aspects of private employment agencies was produced by the *HN* in July of 1915. Occupying three-quarters of a page, the article falls under the heading "NEWSPAPER DOPE" in large, bold letters, followed by the sub-heading "Kansas Needs 30,000 Harvest Workers." An illustration of "three hundred and fifty hoboes" overflowing on the tops of a freight train while a group on the ground looks on is encased in a square and falls below the title and sub-heading. Under the bottom border of the squared illustration reads: "This Is How They Treat Them." According to the article, "the lying advertising of the capitalist press" led to nearly four hundred workers in pursuit of a job making their way to Caldwell, Kansas, on June 6, only to discover their services were not needed.

Because they were victims of false advertising, the unemployed men "threatened the mayor by demanding food and shelter." The "Christian mayor," instead of feeding and sheltering the unemployed migratory workers, "organized a committee of citizens" and armed "his hired thugs" with "sawed-off shot guns and revolvers" to ensure the vagrants were placed "on board a Rock Island freight train, bound south, which took them out of town." Obviously, false advertising of jobs consisted of a scam that profited private agencies; even considering the least money paid for a job—the one dollar White mentions—the profit made by the agency for Caldwell mis-employment consisted of at least $350. Even if there were an employer involved in the scheme, the private agency would still make a profit of $175.

For reasons, such as the Caldwell incident, the I.B.W.A. published any knowledge of sharks and their capitalist practices in designated areas. From the New York office came a statement in September of 1915 that announced "the Shipping Sharks [were] taking advantage of the hard times and [had] raised the price of jobs."[34] Another article, written by J. Scott of the Philadelphia office, warned of "thousands of handbills" advertising jobs complete with "a chance to see England and other foreign countries and get paid for it."[35] Scott then informs his readers of the plight of "one hundred men" who spent weeks upon "a floating hell" only to be "dumped" back on U.S. soil "hungry, penniless, physically broken—victims of the grasping shipping interests." According to Scott, these workers were made to buy clothing from the shipping master at Newport News;

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[34] "New York Briefs" Local No. 3, New York.
[35] "Seeing Europe on a Cattle-Boat."

many had to eat standing up in the ship because of a lack of space; and the rations that were served consisted of "less than half the rations required by law." Also, it should be added that none of these workers saw Europe, that is unless "Avonmouth, Cardiff, Southampton, Liverpool—seen from a port-hole" counts. And in Kansas, "the Shipping Sharks are on the job," according to Scott McPherson, who warns that in October "shipments will go up $200 and wages will come down to $1.35" because the agencies need to pay office heating costs.[36] As well, Quirke writes of the employment sharks' annual berry-picking (complete with free transportation) advertisement that runs in the Baltimore city papers every year for two weeks in early May.[37] Quirke dismisses such an advertisement and says of his experience on the job, "lodged in chicken sheds, cooking in tomato cans, buying our own chuck, working from sunrise to sunset, backaching, muscles sore, tendon strained," all for "about ten dollars to the good for your four weeks' work."

The *HN* also published news of any government intervention into private agency practice. A brief from the Minnesota office, for instance, reports that a "state official declared that the Employment Agencies in Minnesota [are] relics of barbarism," that the city had no right to license these agencies, and that no citizen "should have to pay for the privilege of going to work."[38] In yet another report, Nicholas Alexander, who had "obtained $893 from 154 Greek, Italian and Sicilian laborers to whom he promised work," was fined fifteen dollars and costs.[39]

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[36] "Police in Kansas City."
[37] "Berry Picking."
[38] "Employment Agencies."
[39] "Fines Job Agency Head."

According to the *HN*, despite the outcome, "twelve bailiffs, four policemen and five detectives were present in the court to prevent the workers from making any demonstration." In "Employment Agencies," White celebrates the alterations the state of Washington had produced. White observes Washington as having "found a way to circumvent and beat the private labor agencies. It abolished them and in their place established State Free Employment Bureaus."[40] During the month of July, these bureaus located employment for seven thousand men. Any investigation or intervention by government considered progressive under the I.B.W.A. charter, however, rarely congratulated the government, unless sarcastically. William J. Schweitzer, for instance, celebrates the opening of a State Employment Bureau in California that, according to the author, "really seems to be a public institution."[41] Schweitzer admits, "it is seldom that [he] praises the institutions of the Capitalist class," but insists "it is [his] firm conviction that the present law is the result of that downtrodden 'Hobo Convention.'" And in yet another *HN* piece, "the St. Louis Republic" is reported to have "discovered that the Charity Grafters make a profit of about 90 percent."[42] The writer adds, "even the Capitalist Press wakes up, like Rip Van Winkle, every once in a while."

Whether pirate, parasite, criminal or somnambulist, the I.B.W.A.'s production of the Master class consisted of a monstrosity that thrived on the worker's Slave wage. While this production shifted all symbolic value from the capitalist to the unemployed worker and, in the process, reinscribed the practice of

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[40] "Employment Agencies."
[41] "The California State Employment Bureau."
[42] "Charity."

Othering, it should be mentioned that, at times, the technology also highlighted the *dependency* of the Capitalist on the Proletariat, exposing a dialectic of interdependency as opposed to only a binary logic. Often, however, the potential dynamic interdependency of the Master and the Slave dialectic settled in a place of victimization, blame, retrospect and/or guilt. On the cover of the May 1915 issue of *HN*, for instance, is an illustration of a "blanket stiff"—a man walking the train tracks with his rolled blanket upon his back—and in the background is a sign that reads: "Warning: Private Property. Keep Off."[43] Directly beneath the illustration is an anonymous poem. The first two lines reiterate the interdependent relation the laborer has with the employing class and the nation: "He built the road—/With others of his CLASS, he built the road" (1-2). The final two lines, however, represent the blanket stiff as an introspective dupe of the system: "He walks and walks, and wonders why/In H—L, he built the road" (5-6). Other poems of a more battle-like genre, however, do highlight a dialectic—the labor of the worker, the profit of the Master class, and the impending doom of revolution. Berton Barley's "The Worker,"[44] for example, replicates the dynamic of exchange between laborer and employer by shifting emphasis from one to the other. The significance of value, in this case attached to material gains, remains with the capitalist, but the dialectical paradigm in which the poem is couched exposes the interdependency that results in such profits. Barley's speaker addresses the Master class; he represents labor in such lines as "I have broken my hands on your granite" (1), "my strength on your steel" (2), and "I worked like a

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[43] Cover. *HN*. Volume 1. Number 2. May 1915
[44] "The Worker."

slave" (5). From this labor, the capitalist has received "the world in its beauty" (19) and "the glory and spoil" (20), but not without "shut[ting]" the speaker's "eyes off from the sunlight" (15), his "lungs from the untainted air" (16) and housing the laborer in "horrible places/Surrounded by squalor" (18-19). Barley, then, produces the capitalist as the receiver of spoils but also critiques the system of industrial capitalism by exposing the damaging working conditions that make these spoils possible. In essence, the poet actually alters the meaning of value, I would argue, as opposed to shifting where value is necessarily located. This back and forth movement from laborer to capitalist to laborer promotes a dynamic interdependency between the two classes then lingers, like Marx's map of dialectical materialism, in the overthrow of the present economic system while gesturing toward a synthesis of a new model of social order. Barley writes, "some day the worker will conquer/In a world that was meant for his own!" (25-26).

The I.B.W.A., then, produced a counter-version[45] of the hobo through a combination of discursive technologies of anti-capitalism. The organization and its *"Hobo" News* transformed the hobo into the victim of a monster—the robbing, starving, aristocratic-hoarding, primitive, sleep-walking capitalist. In turn, he represented everything the capitalist was *not*—the anti-capitalist, the good man without resources, the unemployed worker who *desired* work but with improved conditions, including shorter work days and a decent wage. And, as Anderson

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[45] I use the qualifier "counter" in association with "anti" in that anti-capitalist signifies a discourse against capitalism that acts as its opposite; it is valued as *not capitalist*. When couched in binary logic, repeating the ideo-logics of Othering, anti-capitalist signifies a counter-discourse in that the emphasis remains on opposing sides of argument; the logics of value, in other words, do not change. The value simply shifts from one side to the other, countering or reacting via the same methodology.

notes, this I.B.W.A. inversion of worth produced for the social outcast a place with which to identify, a place where one's hostilities toward the economic system could be heard, voiced, written and read. But *value* in I.B.W.A. terms also meant recruitment; it signified numbers of members—the higher the number, the more valuable the organization. And in its desire for bodies, in its packaging and promotion, the organization employed the practice of Othering. Not only did its discourse promote the bifurcated member/non-member divide, but it also maintained a reading of the economic system as Master and Slave; in other words, the organization reinscribed a binary logic based on absolutes. The results of these clear-cut divisions led to absences, such as a more blurred perspective of how the I.B.W.A. actually functioned predominantly on a millionaire's inheritance—an inheritance that accumulated within the industrial capitalist system. Granted, How's inheritance was arguably *purified* when returned to the workers in the form of an organization to benefit the brotherhood of unemployed, but that same organization was built upon the exclusivity inherent in a member/non-member binary. Likewise, the division between member and non-member leaves little room to recognize the *resistance* of hobos who *preferred to* join the I.B.W.A. in the winter months only, or those who caused all the *trouble* with I.B.W.A. membership.

In essence, the binary oppositions between member/non-member and Master/Slave allowed no space for the asocial hobo who actually valued movement over work. While the organization produced a counter-version of the hobo that spoke back to discourses of knowledge distributed regarding the Tramp

Question, the I.B.W.A. used its hobo production as a technology to promote an increase in public jobs and improved working conditions, not intermittent work that sustained a hobo for his travels across the nation. The emphasis was on the unemployed worker. The most troubling absence, I would argue, though, consisted of the I.B.W.A.'s exclusivity of the tramp from the definition of hobo. After all, both the hobo and the tramp labelled those workers who did not travel, but who did work intermittently, the *home guard*, a symbolic construction that differentiated and distanced themselves from these members of the I.B.W.A. By defining the hobo as not a tramp (who does move), in conjunction with the definition of the hobo as a working body—as a body that *desires* work and only moves with the intentions to find a Master—the I.B.W.A. completely erased the hobo's *desire* to move.

**Hobo Hybridity: Jack London**

Jack London, noted as the "first American author to treat the hobo as a by-product of a culture gradually moving from frontier status to an urban industrial society," uses the terms hobo and tramp "interchangeably" in his hobo writings according to Richard Etulain (26, x, fn 3).[46] London, unlike the capitalist press however, did not collect the hobo and the tramp under an umbrella term to define and fix their boundaries of cultural capital, to determine the value of a general

[46] Etulain edited a collection of London's works considered less "stressed" by biographers—*Jack London on the Road: The Tramp Diary and Other Hobo Writings*—in 1979. According to Etulain, biographers of London highlight the author's journey to "the Klondike and his voyages to the Pacific as notable events," but tend to dismiss London's "tramp trip across the United States in 1894" (preface). The Etulain anthology of London's hobo writings consists, for instance, of the first time London's "Tramp Diary," written in 1894, had ever been published in full.

tramp identity for national objectification.[47] I would argue, instead, that the author's interchanging of the terms represents the result of both structuralist constructions of hobo and tramp and, as well, actually speaks to a post-structural slippage in their signification. Anderson states that, in his attempt to map a typology of homeless men, for instance, "individuals are continually passing from one group into another group. One man in his lifetime may perchance have been, in turn, seasonal laborer, hobo, tramp, home guard, and bum" (106). Regardless, then, of the various productions of the hobo and the tramp that attempted to organize their difference into fixed identities, "difficulty" persisted, or, as Anderson argues, the gathering of "the numbers of different types of homeless men can be little more than a guess" (106). In other words, there exists an excess of meaning engendered by the persistent mobility of bodies and their historical materialism unrecuperated by rigid taxonomies. Considering the production of the hobo as one who works and moves, as well as the definition of the tramp as one who moves but will not work,[48] the organization of such difference consists of an exercise in futility. After all, is not the hobo who has quit a job, who is not interested in immediately appropriating another, who, instead, ambles through the city streets of Hobohemia, a tramp—one who wanders but will not work?

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[47] Note back to Flynt's employment of the hobo as a type of tramp, for instance.

[48] Not only the I.B.W.A. used this definition of difference between the tramp and the hobo. Anderson, as well, employs this classification. Likewise, this particular definition of difference maintains a privilege of repetition in current hobo scholarship ("Hobo History"). Steamtrain Maury, however, defines a hobo as "a man that [sic] worked along the way. They followed the railroads, and they worked here and there." Tramp, says Maury, "means 'walker' . . . a professional walking man . . . and he worked. He was just a different kind of vagabond than the hobo" (Moon). Maury is not the only one who differentiates the hobo from the tramp by modes of travel. The American Studies web-site produced by the University of Virginia also equates the railroad with the hobo, or at least that "the tramp was in a hurry, and as he began to steal his lifts on the freights he began to turn himself into a hobo" ("In Search of the Hobo").

I would argue that, despite his own occasional taxonomizing of hobos[49] and their distinguishable traits, London recognized and perhaps even appreciated the slippage inherent in such systems of classification. In its production of the hobo as a tramp, the capitalist press emphasized the synonymous; the I.B.W.A. accentuated difference and distance. London, however, often produced the two terms as interchangeable. This exchange of one term for the other, I would argue, consists of both an overlap and a difference from previous productions of the hobo and the tramp. London's productions, then, may be read as a collision of various discourses. There exists, after all, a synonymity in the exchange of terms, repeating the practice of the capitalist press and its institutions, and, as well, this construction rejects the difference and distance between hobos and tramps endorsed by the I.B.W.A. However, inherent in this *sameness* there remains a resistance in the form of difference in the terms themselves. Not only do hobo and tramp represent difference in their actual construction in language, or in their spelling, but they also signify difference in the historical productions of discourse that give them meaning. London, then, repeats the synonymity of the capitalist press, but locates meaning in the anti-capitalist discourse of such labor organizations as the I.B.W.A. As opposed to maintaining the binary between the capitalist and the anti-capitalist press, the exchangeability of terms speaks to a product of both methodologies. London's exchanging of terms destabilizes both anti-capitalist and capitalist constructions of the hobo and the tramp. On the one hand, his productions move against the bifurcated construction of hobo and tramp;

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[49] In "The Road," for instance, London outlines "Trampdom," which consists of several types of tramps, including the "Profesh," "Stew Bum," "Alki Stiffs," "Fakirs," and "Road-kids" (*Jack London on the Road*, 71-76).

on the other hand, they challenge industrial capitalism with a socialist agenda. And his interchanging of terms signifies a movement in meaning, a slippage engendered by the unpredictability of term usage. The terms do not represent this interchangeability within London's individual essays, sketches and fiction, however. But within a compilation of London's hobo writings, the slippery interchange persists.

London does, however, separate the worker from the tramp, but, like the hobo and the tramp, only to develop more fully their actual connections. In his poem "The Worker and the Tramp," for instance, the binary between employed and unemployed is recast as a dialectic of recognized interdependency. "On you I depend/For my work" (7-8), states London's speaker—the worker—who addresses the unemployed—who never speaks, but whose presence is verified by action: "Ah! you comprehend/That I owe you a debt" (7, 16). The poem's structure, as well, produces a back and forth flow by repetition of lines. The final lines of the first five stanzas alternate between "Here's a quarter to spend" (3, 9, 15) and "Heaven bless you, my friend" (6, 12), for example. The dialectic, then, consists of the employed who recognizes that the unemployed is actually responsible for the status of the employed. "My job you would get" (5), states the speaker to the tramp who is injured. He, then, pays the tramp a quarter in the form of a "debt" owed (16). London expands this dialectic in his essay "The Tramp," written in 1901.[50] Using an interview with Frank O'Neil, Chicago's

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[50] According to Etulain, London had great difficulty finding a publisher for this piece. In 1901 the author sent the manuscript to "*twenty magazines—including* Century (twice), Cosmopolitan, Atlantic, Saturday Evening Post, Collier's Weekly, and Harper's Monthly—*before* Wilshire's *accepted the essay*" (121).

Superintendent of Police, that had been published in the capitalist press, London draws the following inference: "the tramp is undesirable" (123). From this socially sanctioned statement, the author argues for an appendage in definition and meaning: "the tramp is only *personally* undesirable. . . . he is *negatively* desirable" (123). According to London, the "surplus labor army" consists of some tramps who work intermittently when the need arises; only surplus labor meets the "irregular and periodical demands for labor," such as that engendered by canal and railroad construction (125). The intermittent laborer comprises "the reserve fund of social energy," according to London (125). The author then historicizes the surplus labor army, arguing that, even in 1903[51]—"a year adjudged most prosperous in the annals of the United States"—the surplus labor army still thrived (125). London asks, "if there were constant work at good wages for every man, who else would harvest the crops?" (126). The intermittent unemployed of the surplus labor army ensures the capitalist's profit, for without a job the unemployed's "surplus labor acts as a check upon all employed labor," particularly in the areas of unskilled work (126). The surplus labor force, states London, "is the lash by which the masters hold the workers to their tasks or drive them back to their tasks when they have revolted" (126). In other words, London defines the tramp as "the by-product of economic necessity"; his function "is a negative function" that sustains the industrial capitalist system (123); "without [surplus labor] the present construction of society would fall to pieces" (135).

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[51] Considering Etulain states that this essay was written in 1901 and London references the year 1903 within the piece, it is most probable that the author revisited and revised the essay before its subsequent publication in *The Saturday Evening Post* in November of 1904, which consists of the copy Etulain cites in *Jack London on the Road* (121).

Having exposed the interdependency of the employed and the unemployed, London then heroicizes the tramp who moves on the road: "no one misses these men. . . . in going away they have made it somewhat easier for those who remain" (135). London ends this piece with a request of his readership. "Let us refrain from telling the tramp to go to work," he states. And he adds that the tramp is "the scapegoat to our economic and industrial sinning. . . . society made him. He did not make himself" (136). London, then, produces the tramp as a by-product of the socio-economic system. But he also produces the tramp within this same piece along Darwinian lines, not unlike many tramp reformers.

According to London, *skilled* laborers of the industrial system consist of a group less threatened by the surplus labor force. London, not unlike the I.W.W., simply argues that any union of the skilled laborer "must be a monopoly" that can "regulate" the production of skilled workers and, in the process, "be invincible" (126-7). The surplus labor army, as mentioned above, threatens the *unskilled* laborer in particular. Industrial capitalism, easily understood as a class system dependent upon efficiency of skill, necessitates that the surplus laborer occupy the lowest rung. London argues, however, that within this space of potential, yet unemployed laborers, there remains a competitive edge that leads to an exclusivity among unskilled laborers as well. Comprising the surplus labor army, according to London, is the "unfit and inefficient. . . . the men who have tried and failed, the men who cannot hold jobs. . . . Common work, any kind of work, wherever or however they can obtain it, is their portion" (128). The author adds that, in addition to these "inefficients" (128), the surplus labor army also consists

of "skilled but unsteady and unreliable men" or men who are skilled but have lost their jobs due to cut-backs (129). In this situation, the tramp, states London, "is a tramp because some one had to be a tramp" (129). But London then goes on, employing a resonance of Flynt, and claims that tramps consist of two types: the "discouraged worker or the *discouraged criminal*" (129 emphasis added). But just as Flynt blurs the distinctions between the tramp and the criminal, London then argues that the discouraged criminal "proves to be a discouraged worker or a descendant of discouraged workers," so the author opts for this latter term in an apparent reversal of signification and discourse—criminal as discouraged worker—opposed to Flynt's chronology—tramp as discouraged criminal (130). London argues that in the surplus labor army "are herded the mediocre, the inefficient, the unfit, and those incapable of satisfying the industrial needs of the system" and that the competition for work within this group is "sordid and savage," that "this struggle leads to discouragement, and the victims of this discouragement are the criminal and the tramp" (135). The tramp, specifically, takes to the road. And this is how he serves his *negative function*. The road, according to London, consists of "one of the safety valves through which waste of the social organism is given off" (135). London then argues, not unlike Brewer, that "this waste," represented by tramps, "must be eliminated" (135). London states:

> Chloroform or electrocution would be a simple, merciful solution of this problem of elimination; but the ruling ethics, while permitting the human waste, will not permit a humane elimination

> of that waste. This paradox demonstrates the irreconcilability of theoretical ethics and industrial need. (135)

Unlike the rhetoric of Brewer that endorses the elimination of the tramp in order to purify the race of the nation, London employs such a harsh statement in a satirical fashion, with the intent to improve economic conditions or, at the very least, the treatment of unemployed wanderers. By revealing the irreconcilability of a nation that speaks of the value inherent in human life, but that also insists on profits gained by inhumane treatment of its citizens, London employs an ironic reversal—one which represents not the tramp, but the nation and its socio-economic structure as barbaric. London exposes the socio-economic Darwinian construction that fuels the allocation of value—its meaning attached to employment—within industrial capitalism. Yet he does not simply rely on the practice of de-valuing the industrial capitalist, as does the I.B.W.A., in his construction of the tramp within such a system. The tramp gains value in his economic connection to the employed; the employed worker depends upon the tramp's unemployment. London insists, then, that the tramp be reconsidered a "hero" in that, without him, another would take his place (136). London's resignification of the hobo and/or tramp as hero, however, does not speak of a celebratory figure, but of a figure relied upon for his *negative function* within industial capitalism. And in constructing the tramp and/or hobo as a heroic function, London, in other works, also produces the tramp as the rebellious wanderer—the hobo and/or tramp of choice.

Like Van de Warker, London looks to "the blood" of the tramp in this essay (133). But the tramp's blood does not represent his aristocratic lineage. Instead, "in the blood" of particular unemployed workers "a rebellion will quicken, and these *will elect* to become either a felon or a tramp," as opposed to the other unemployed who will remain fixed in the slums and tenements, repetitively awaiting temporary work to surface as they starve (133-134 emphasis added). London explains that, while the tramp comprehends himself a "failure" of the industrial order, he "*refuses to accept* the punishment and *swerves aside* from the slum to vagabondage" (134 emphasis added). It is, according to London, the "average beast in the social pit" who is typically "too much of a slave to the orthodox ethics and ideals of his masters to manifest this flicker of rebellion" (134). Additionally, London's speaker in the formerly mentioned poem "The Worker and the Tramp" addresses the unemployed addressee as a "friend" (1) "who won't sweat" (2) in the first stanza and one on the "mend" (4) in stanza two. While it is unclear if the addressee consists of the same persona in each stanza, for only the more generalized second person is present, I would argue that the addressee should be read as different receivers of dialogue, or even the same addressee at different historical moments. Under this lens, the tramp consists of both the "man" (2) who *will not* sweat and the addressee who is *unable* to work. London's later line—"Your course I commend" (10)—suggests such an interpretation of at least two types of addressees, as it is doubtful that the speaker would find worthy an involuntary course of action consisting of injury. The poem, then, produces the tramp as both unable to work *and* exercising his

preference not to. In this poem and the essay "The Tramp," then, London's hobo/tramp represents both the I.B.W.A. production of the hobo who *cannot* work, as well as the public perception of the tramp who *chooses* not to. London develops the tramp who prefers not to work as, first, a by-product of the socio-economic order but, additionally, as a space of resistance within that same industrial capitalist order. While it is true that this tramp consists of a residual result of the struggle of the fittest, he also *refuses to accept the punishment* of the established order and *chooses to swerve* from the standard trajectory of fixed location complete with perpetual discouragement. It is a combination of rebellion and the "unenviable lot of the poor worker" that entices this man to the road, but it is his adventures on the road that persuade him to "impose a valorous boycott on all work" (134). According to London, from having "loafed, seen the country and green things, laughed in joy, laid on his back and listened to the birds singing overhead, unannoyed by factory whistles and bosses' harsh commands," the rebellious hobo and/or tramp has the knowledge that, "not only has he been care-free and happy" and "alive," but he has "achieve[d] a new outlook on life" by remaining idle (134).

In his sketches of hobo subculture, London highlights the idle times of the tramp population, but further develops these spaces as unfixed, spontaneous and imaginative. Not unlike Mark Twain who developed the character of run-away Huck Finn who refused to be civilized, or the tall tale of the jumping frog of Calaveras county, London produced hobo/tramp characters who veered from the status quo trajectory of stasis and accumulation of material goods to the more

mysterious and unfamiliar open road adventure. And he developed the open road adventure, specifically, through the tall tale—the hobo/tramp's spinning of yarns. In "'Frisco Kid's Story," for instance, "'de 'Frisco Kid'" speaks, unknowingly, to a father in search of his missing son (61). London's apparently preferred coin the "quarter" surfaces again; the father pays 'Frisco Kid the money to ensure that, while he searches for information regarding Charley, the man is not "a fly cop" (61). After a general description of the missing boy, 'Frisco Kid, from "de road" (61), recalls he has "knowed'm onst" (62). Upon realizing Kid holds in his possession the ring and locket once worn by Charley, the inquisitive father grabs hold of the arm of the road kid, releasing his appendage only after 'Frisco Kid makes a deal to "tell yer all I knows" (62). What transpires from this point on consists of the spinning of a tall tale complete with open road enticements. 'Frisco Kid explains that he and his "pal" Leory Joe were in Sacramento "to work de fair" "las' year 'bout dis time" (62). "One hot day—an' it wuz a scorcher," explains the Kid, he

> wuz mopin' down de main drag . . . w'en [he] bumped up gainst de kid wid de yaller hair. He was wid four er five hobos, an' w'en I seed his good togs.[52] . . . I t'ought I'd snare'm meself, an' I up an' sez, jest like we wuz ol' fren's . . . "Come on; let's go swimming." Yer see, I tought I'd like ter get a finger in de pie meself. (62)

'Frisco Kid continues his story of that particular day that included "swearin'," completely undressing "right down ter de skin" "on a san'bar" with "a lot of other road-kids," and, in particular, the swimming and "lay[ing] on de sand in de sun"

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[52] Charley's "togs" signify his clothing.

that offered "lots of joy" (63). He explains to his listener that Charley, before entering the water, "guv [to Kid] his hoop[53] to wear fer'm, cos he wuz leary dat it'd slip off'n his finger in de water" (63). Likewise, says Kid, he took Charley's locket from his trouser pocket "ter see wot it wuz like. . . . it wuz eighteen K., an' den I kep' it, so de odder kids cudn't swipe it" (63). The Kid then recalls the image of Charley swimming: "I can see 'm now wid his han's claspt behind his head, an' his pritty face all smiles an' laffin, an' his yaller hair flyin' ev'ry way" (63). London's 'Frisco Kid, then, constructs life on the road as a childhood paradise where the value of goods, whether a ring, locket or clothing, need be removed before pleasure and *joy* can ensue.

But according to 'Frisco Kid, "all of a sudden like, [Charley] struck a hole an' went down. We wuz all in de water like a shot, but he never cum up any more" (63). Allegedly, Charley "couldn't swim a stroke" and had "struck de undertow" (63). The Kid then explains that "after a while, de 'Punk Kid' goes up and takes the ticker" from Charley's heap of clothes on the beach, and then "up goes de 'Midget Kid' an' take his coat, an' de 'Cookey Kid' his shirt, an' so on" (64). The Kid took what was left—Charley's "kicks," or shoes—"coz [his] wuz no good" (64). After the group had discarded their clothes in a heap where Charley's once were, the "'Orator Kid'" "went and gave de coroner de tip, an' den run out of de office, so dey cudn't pinch 'm" (64). According to the Kid, Charley's body was found "t'ree days" later "way down de river" (64). The listener to 'Frisco Kid's tale begins to cry at the story's end; he then gives the Kid

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[53] ring

"five big cart-wheels"[54] in payment. Kid, then states, "yer wuz de kid's ole man," gives the listener "de hoop an' locket" and explains that he must bid good-bye because he is "goin' out on dat freight over dere. Dere she whistles now, an' I must be movin'" (64).

While the drowning of Charley speaks to the well-developed dangers of the road that produced literature loaded with warnings and, in turn, fear that would discourage children from pursuing such a runaway lifestyle, a reader more familiar with such a sub-culture, as well as its employment of the hobo yarn, recognizes the tactics of 'Frisco Kid. Accosted with the locket and ring on his person by an adult male who is not an officer of the law, but inquires about a boy of the road, the Kid quickly manufactures a tale of trust and loyalty—of companionship—between he and the missing boy that explains his possessing Charley's recognizable personal items to the child's father. The tale gains even more mileage, however, as, simultaneously, it releases the Kid from any further inquisitions from the father; prevents the father from looking for Charley further, which maintains any loyalty between road-kids not wanting to be found; and the story results in a stake from spinning a yarn. In other words, it is far more probable that 'Frisco Kid and Charley did meet *onst* on the road, that the meeting resulted in Charley's personal items having been stolen or gained in a game of chance. Regardless, it is the telling of the tale that holds the most value.

Another 'Frisco Kid story entitled "And 'Frisco Kid Came Back" consists of yet another monologue by the same character. The Kid in this piece returns to

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[54] In all my research of hobo lingo, I have yet to run across "cart-wheel." I would assume, however, that the term signifies the fifty-cent piece or the dollar. Suffice it to say that the Kid receives payment for his story.

a familiar group of "stiffs" and needs to explain his "new togs" (65). Kid begins his tale with "dis is how de presto change happened" and continues to explain one particular day of the worst luck he could imagine engendered by superstition. As 'Frisco Kid explains it, he took "de C.B. and Q. jerk," landed in a "jay town," where he was "hoodooed" (65). Allegedly, he had broken into a house "fer . . . breakfas' an' bumpt up inter a red-headed woman" and "wuz dat rattled" that he "fergot ter steal de soap" (65). He went to another house and "dere wuz a cross-eyed man," but the Kid forgot to "spit in [his] hat," which then led to his asking for money from a man on the street who ended up being "a fly cop"; this resulted in the Kid receiving "thirty days" (65). Upon his release, "dere wuzn't a frieght train along 'till dark," so 'Frisco Kid decided to swim and fish at a local river. While he does not catch a fish, he does save a man from drowning by throwing him the line of his fishing pole. The man promises to "reward" 'Frisco and, in doing so, he and his wife "adopt" the Kid (66). The gang of stiffs interjects, noted only in the voice of Kid who retorts, "Wait till I give yer me spiel" (66). According to the Kid, while living with this couple his reveries were consistently interrupted by the man who read "from de book" every morning and who expected the Kid to listen and comment on the readings (66). Then, states the Kid, "I cudn't quit swearin'" and "dey wud allus smell me breath ter see if I'd ben smokin'" (67). 'Frisco Kid admits that he just "cudn't never ketch on ter dere style"; he either kept "fergettin' ter put de sugar spoon back in de bowl," or he "chewed out loud an' dat scraped on dere nerves" (67). So, too, states the Kid, the couple "tried ter sen' me ter school," and he adds, "dey wuz allus *tryin' ter*

*improve me*" (67 emphasis added). In the story's end, hearing "an engine whistle," his memories of how he "uster ketch de blind an' shinny up ter de decks," along with his recollections of "de las' mulligan" he had eaten—a combination of Pittsburg Joe's bumming from the butcher, Chi Slim's begging from the bakery, Montana Sports' hitting "de groceries," his own stealing of "de chickens," Moulder Blackey's getting "de beer," Leary Joe's building the fire, and Skysail Jack's "cookin'"—made the Kid "guv" his "adopted parents de ditch, an' hit de road onst more" (68). And once his story is complete, 'Frisco Kid hits "de greasy, ole deck again" and bids the stiffs good-bye (68).

London's development of the road as a lifestyle, then, consists of the author promoting a sense of value where a lack of social discipline is concerned; the road values that which the system has cast off. Not only does 'Frisco Kid *prefer* the road to that of the home, but he admits he *cudn't never ketch on ter dere style*, suggesting, as London explains in "The Tramp," a type of denizen *incapable of satisfying the industrial needs of the system*. The system develops, in the monologues of Kid, as a series of disciplinary mechanisms produced solely to homogenize the speaker—a particular clothing, the Bible, dining etiquette, and regimented speech—while the road consists of a series of spontaneous adventures. Likewise, London develops Charley, in "'Frisco Kid's Story," for example, as the young product of such a socially-sanctioned system, its emphasis on discipline. The Kid notes Charley as "so pritty an' innisent like" in that the boy "kinder blush an' wudn't look at me fer a long while" when the Kid "cussed" (63). And 'Frisco notices a particular difference in Charley's clothing: "Say! it

wuz a sight ter see dat yaller-haired kid's clo's. Right down ter de skin dey wuz as fine as fine cud be. A good 'eal better'n I ever wore" (63). Yet, despite his refinement, Charley cannot swim, nor can his father outwit the clever 'Frisco Kid. The road, then, values the products of its own experience—wit, practicality and, in particular, the story that contains them both.

The oral tradition of story telling—spinning yarns or telling the tall-tale—remains at the center of London's hobo sketches. In "The Princess," for instance, three amputees—all, I should mention, missing one arm—gradually produce an aggregate in a "jungle camp" in the woods near the railroad tracks (183).[55] London develops each as a monstrous version of the human body—one's face, for instance, "looked as if, at some period, it had stopped a hand-grenade"; another "bulged everywhere. . . . his eyelids bulged, and his blue eyes bulged in competition with them"; and the third has a nose "like a buzzard's beak," and "his one hand, lean and crooked, was a talon" (183-185). The three have not only their amputated arms in common, but the group consists of "alkie" stiffs, or those who basically thrive on a combination of river water and the "druggist's alcohol" (184). The story consists of all three telling a story of a princess.[56] Fatty speaks first and tells of his former wife, a Polynesian princess, who had been threatened by a tiger shark. Fatty's "prowess at swimming" leads to his battling the shark, during which he loses his arm to the shark's toothed grasp. Whiskers then "takes

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[55] In hobo argot, those tramps and hobos who had lost an appendage received a type of adjective to be added to their monikers or had their monikers altered completely. One who had lost an arm, for instance, was referred to as "wingy," while one who had lost a leg was "peg." (See Anderson and DeLorenzo)

[56] In two of these three stories told, the princess is repeatedly produced as Polynesian and married to the hobo story-teller. These references, then, may be read as the white colonizer of the exotic female body, both anatomical and geographical. (Whiskers claims he was rich, built a business on the Polynesian island and, as well, a church for his princess, for instance.)

up the tale" and speaks of his former wife, another Polynesian princess, whose "deliciousness" affected the alkie in such a way that he "reformed" and "went to church" (197). Because Whiskers was so "rich" with "credit," he established a sugar-cane operation on the island in order to build and support a large church for his princess (198-9). One day, while adjusting the "feed-rollers" of the mill, Whisker's fingers were caught, and his entire body had "started on [its] way" "feed[ing] through" (201). Luckily, though, a man by the name of Motomoe used a machete to "hack [Whisker's] arm off just outside the shoulder" (202). Moving on, Slim then begins his tale "on the island of Tagalag," but then ends his episodic sea adventure marooned on an island with only dynamite, gin and coconuts. Each day members of the crew attempt to procure a fish dinner by dynamiting any school they saw, but each time the individual would blow up, and no fish would be had. Slim, of course, was the last left on the island, so he attempted the same scheme of his deceased compatriots. Using only "a third" of a stick of dynamite, Slim threw the explosive at a school of mullet, but unfortunately threw the fire stick into the ocean rather than the stick of dynamite after its lighting. And, of course, his "arm went off with the stick when it went off" (208). Fatty interrupts Slim and asks, "what happened then?" Slim retorts, "Oh! Then the princess married me, of course" (208). At this point, both Fatty and Whiskers, "in solemn silence, each with his one arm" aiding "the one arm of the other in rolling and tying his bundle" complete their task and travel "away out of the circle of firelight" (209). Later, they both speak the same: "No gentleman would have done it" (209). "The Princess," then, speaks to the value of spinning a yarn, but to

the agreed upon guidelines of the storytellers and audience as well. Anderson mentions in his study of hobos that the jungle had many unwritten rules that maintained the area and prevented stealing; anybody caught stealing, for instance, suffered either ostracization or an aggregate beating, but London extends such unwritten rules to the art of story-telling. Whiskers and Fatty remove themselves from the company of Slim, who sits alone at the fire at the end of London's production. The author reveals, then, that it matters not how tall the tale is when comprehending its value; instead, the audience alone determines its worth. Granted, a writer himself, London emphasizing the value of the tale being determined by the audience, or whether or not the addressee invests in the tale and stays to listen, seems more than predictable. My point of intervention, however, lies with the speaker's dependency on the audience, for the social act of spinning the yarn necessitates an addressee and, in turn, speaks directly to hobo aggregates and their structure.

London's sketches reveal the hobo and/or tramp as a character of both asocial and communal dimensions. The author mythologizes the tramp through a technique of layered story telling as an individualist who moves for the most part in accordance with his desire, but London also constructs him as one with communal obligations and needs. Each story summarized above, for instance, begins with an unexpected encounter perpetuated by movement and ends with the movement of at least one character. Sandwiched between these kinetics is the tall tale, the space of, at first glance, the monologue, but when reconsidered, a process of social connection. Each of the tramp stories, as well as the poem, contains

reactions from the addressee, whether in the form of a gesture, a physical movement, or a verbal interruption, that insist on the addressee as an essential social function for the hobo and/or tramp, as well as the story itself. London designs these interruptions as moments within the monologue in most cases, keeping the emphasis on the individual spinner of the yarn. But by developing the speaker by way of the monologue while the addressee remains a flat character, London actually represents the asocial individualist dependent upon social connection, despite the lack of specificity assigned to the addressee. This rhetorical tactic actually enhances an understanding of hobo sub-culture. The communal aspects of the road—jungle, street, or boxcar—shifted as well; they were both predictable and unstable simultaneously. In other words, there was always a hobo aggregate, but the geographical location and composition of such a spontaneous grouping perpetually altered. Therefore, the generalized character of the addressee represents the unstable and consistently fluctuating membership of hobo aggregates.

**Objects Remaining**

There exist additional objects remaining that speak to other hobo artists. Much of hobo song, for instance, was collected by the I.W.W., but because of the I.W.W.'s claim to such tuned lyrics, the actual authorship of these cultural productions is forever unknown. The labor organization collected, printed, and copyrighted a vast number of songs of the road and was known to alter several so

that the lyrics spoke directly to the I.W.W. agenda of labor agitation, as well as an emphasis on their own organization and its recruitment.[57]

The appropriation of hobo art for profit continues. For instance, one of the most collectable pieces of hobo art is known as the "Hobo Nickel"[58]—a Buffalo Nickel that has been re-carved by hobos during leisure time, whether on the road, in the jungle, or in jail.[59] Originally a *coin* with a Native American depicted on one side and a bison on the reverse, the Buffalo Nickel proved the chosen canvas for many a hobo whittler. Adolph Vandertie and Patrick Spielman argue that the hobo was a "natural" for wood carving because he consistently carried a jackknife, had much leisure time to spend, and "wood was always available." The Hobo Nickel represents a palimpsest of sorts, for the hobo would whittle various images into and onto the depictions of the Native American and the Bison originally found on the wooden coin. Typically the image of the Native American would be transformed into various headshots, including those of "an acquaintance, a self portrait, a clown, a famous figure," and the reverse side—that of the Bison—would be recarved into another animal, "usually a donkey or an elephant."[60] Read as a palimpsest, then, these nickels represent a wooden canvas of American undesirables, a layered history of threats to the bourgeois race and, therefore, nation. Typically, however, hobo art, such as that of the nickel, gains

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[57] Joe Hill was notably one of the most popular writers of song for the International Workers of the World organization. A labor agitator, Hill was allegedly imprisoned for a murder he did not commit. In 1915, at the age of thirty-six, he was put to death by firing squad in Salt Lake City. Following his death, Hill became a martyr for labor agitation organization. The I.W.W. actually had Hill's remains cremated and sent packets of his ashes to all I.W.W. locals (except in Utah). (See Anderson, DeLorenzo and *Shadows of Death*, Time Life Books.)

[58] "Hobo Nickel."

[59] "Hobo Art."

[60] "Hobo Nickel"

value in the twenty-first century as a collector's item, or rare commodity, rather than an object of historical and ideological analysis. Hobos also whittled what Vandertie and Spielman call "one of the original forms of folk art, or hobo art"—the "ball-in-the-cage or the chain." Transient artists tended to carve and whittle a raw piece of wood, of any size and dimension but typically long and narrow, into a more "whimsical" than "utilitarian" piece of art. These chains or ball-in-the-cage carvings, in the end, transformed wood into chain links, as well as into wooden balls still encased in the original wooden casing—a casing whittled into an ornate box—and consisted of "intricate detail" and "skilfull carving."[61] Hobos exchanged these nickels, chains, and ball-in-the-cage carvings for meals, money, and for favors from guards while incarcerated; they were also given as gifts to other hobos one met along the road.[62]

Not unlike the I.B.W.A. that promoted a distinction between the hobo and the tramp, collectors of the "wanderer's art form" differentiate the hobo's art from that of Tramp Art.[63] Most collectors of tramp and hobo artefacts argue that the distinct form of tramp art originated with itinerant European craftsmen. In the post Civil War era, German and Scandinavian tradesmen arrived in the U.S. to aid in rebuilding the south, but ended up workers in the same railroad construction that would eclipse Lincoln's plan of Reconstruction with an emphasis on Manifest Destiny. These European craftsmen brought with them a distinct method of carving and notching wood that represented their *rebelling* against the "excesses of Art Nouveau," as well as against the "formality of the pattern books and

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[61] "Hobo Art"
[62] "Hobo Art"
[63] Spielman and Vandertie.

furniture guilds" they had known in Europe.[64] Tramp Art consisted of chip carving, notching, and gouging that resulted in "pyramidal forms built up like a ziggurat," "v-shaped" notchings resulting in "an overall geometric or zigzag pattern," as well as a "lattice construction known as the 'crown of thorns'."[65] Tramp art, as opposed to hobo art, is considered more "functional" in that the pieces produced, in the end, may serve as mirrors, chest of drawers, and chairs.[66] The tramp artist was known to embellish these utilitarian pieces with "raw materials at hand," such as discarded doorknobs, handles, and slivers of mirror and glass.[67] But the crucial staple of tramp art consisted of the cigar box of the nineteenth century. The cigar, having gained cultural capital by the mid-1850s, represented a "sign of masculinity and affluence" and, therefore, became rather popular.[68] After 1850, packaging cigars in boxes became a marketing tool for most major companies; these boxes in which cigars were now sold were built from "exotic Brazilian mahogany and Spanish cedar."[69] Strict revenue laws, however, prohibited cigar boxes from being reused to package new cigars, so cigar vendors sold the boxes "for pennies to enterprising wood carvers."[70] With the advent of cigarettes, cigar manufacturers ceased packaging all cigars in wooden boxes, and tramp art met its decline.[71] But in the meantime, tramps used

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[64] "A European Legacy"
[65] "A European Legacy"
[66] "A European Legacy"
[67] "A European Legacy."
[68] "A European Legacy."
[69] "A European Legacy."
[70] "A European Legacy."
[71] "A European Legacy."

their art as goods of exchange in order to trade for meals and money. Likewise, tramp art was also used as a token of friendship in the form of the gift.[72]

Some of the most intriguing objects remaining of hobo subculture include material manifestations of the communication network used by transients. While not usually considered *art* by collectors, "hobo graffiti" or "train writing" has become a fascination for some cultural historians.[73] Some even argue that the contemporary practice of "tagging," or the "conventional aerosol graffiti" seen on subway and rail cars in contemporary settings originated in American hobo subculture.[74] In fact, the word *artist* for hobos, according to DeLorenzo, actually means "anyone who draws logos or writes slogans on the sides of freight cars" (31). Hobos, while waiting for freights to arrive, tended to chalk their monikers, at times with great detail, on the outside of unmoving box cars, the inside of moving freights, and especially on the water tanks near railroad yards.[75] The most prolific of sign systems in hobo subculture, however, consisted of symbols chalked in city streets and etched along the road. This particular hobo language, like the vocal argot used between hobos, tended to be coded in that, without any knowledge of the road and experience with hobos, these particular languages were undecipherable. The hobo vernacular consisted of coded words, such as "benny," meaning overcoat; "bone polisher," meaning mean dog; and "gandy dancing," which meant laying railroad, to name only a few (DeLorenzo 31-41). Likewise, hobo signs ranged from that of a simple drawing of a cat, representing "kind lady

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[72] Spielman and Vandertie.
[73] "Bozo Hobo."
[74] "Bozo Hobo."
[75] "Bozo Hobo."

lives here"; to a circle next to a square, each with a dot in the middle, meaning "ill-tempered man lives here"; to a basic cross, which meant "religious talk will get you a meal."[76] By way of these basic marks, which were typically "written in chalk or coal on a trestle, fence, building or sidewalk," hobos mapped and, in turn, interpreted towns, cities, jungles, and individual homes.[77] Most, if not all, consisted of signs specifically designed to signal danger or aid to fellow hobos. A cross with a circled face in its upper right indicated "doctor here won't charge" while a triangle with arm-like extensions on either side represented "man with a gun."[78] Studying the sign system of hobo subculture enables a better understanding of life on the road, particularly when looking for spaces of *resisting* from and for the hobo. While some signs speak directly to the consequences of tramp reform, such as two concatenate circles representing "hobos arrested on sight," several signs represent resistance in the form of "care here if you are sick," "safe camp," "can sleep in barn," and "help if sick" (DeLorenzo 45), suggesting aid from locals. Likewise, the etched and chalked language itself represents yet another way in which hobos, while primarily lone wanderers, connected to their aggregates in a form of resistant social exchange. But as signs were etched in chalk or coal, even these were fleeting and subject to change.[79]

These remaining objects speak to both the asocial and communal dimensions of the American hobo. Hobo songs were sung around jungle

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[76] "Hobo Signs & Symbols," "HoboSigns," and DeLorenzo (45-47).
[77] "Hobo Signs & Symbols."
[78] "Hobo Signs & Symbols."
[79] Interesting to note is that these hobo signs have become fixed and, in turn, commodified. The Edmonton gift shop named the Treasure Barrel, for instance, sells ceramic tiles complete with hobo signs for $14.95 Canadian. The small company producing these hobo signs is located in Calgary, Alberta.

campfires but typically written in boxcars alone; their nickels and furniture were carved and whittled during times of isolation and leisure, but were exchanged with others for food, money, or simply as tokens of friendship. And their language of signs, while written by one, tended to aid several others. But these objects remaining also speak to the instability and spontaneity of hobo subculture. After all, their songs were continually altered; their nickels were recarved; their furniture broken down and notched into another shape; their argot continually changed, as most languages do; and their signs, unless etched into wood, did not survive precipitation. Yet the hoboesque combination of asocial activity and communal connection survived throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. And it did so by locating value in the fleeting and the spontaneous, as opposed to the static and accumulative. As mentioned above, hobo aggregates were as predictable as they were unstable. Intersections between hobos and tramps—listening to soap-box orators, sharing a piece of floor for the night, spinning yarns around the jungle fire—were predictable, but the composition of these collisions was never always the same. Of course, so, too, were the medical, socio-journalistic, juridico and industrial capitalist attempts at taxonomizing them. In fact, by 1931 Henry Ford celebrated hobo/tramp practices after he put 75,000 men out of work and on the road during the Great Depression. The capitalist argued, "'it's the best education in the world for those boys, that travelling around!'" (qtd. in Davis 272). In my search for the American hobo, then, I continue to slide in the slippery realm of signification.

**Discursive Productions Summarized**

Who, then, was the American hobo? My only answer is that the identity must lie in the collision of multiple discourses of American modernization, its emphases and its antitheses, but, as well, in the peripheral of the same. In my search for the American hobo I have located such an identity, however unstable, in the production of various discourses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Whether molded as a regressed species unable to maintain modernity's preoccupation with production and consumption, the parasite who feeds off industrial citizenry, or the clown who entertains through exaggerated features and silence, the hobo represents a troubling feature of the American landscape. Named aristocratic by some, the proletariat by others, the hobo consistently moves in meaning. Yet the most public productions of this American typology developed a portion of its citizenry as fixed—primitive, criminal, and worthy only of extermination—the monster, in other words, of a nation. As Foucault has mentioned, death tends to be found in discourses of life. And in the case of multiple discourses of reform and extermination of the tramp, inclusive of the hobo, the lives of the bourgeoisie took precedence. Yet this same publication power tended, as well, to produce its own resistance. For labor organizers and agitators developed the hobo as the proletariat in the struggle against capitalism, the victim of an economic-industrial system and, in the process, exposed industrial capitalism as the actual monster, parasitical in nature and buried deep within the nation. But even these discourses tended to strip the hobo of his

mobility, of his *conscientious objecting to*, which is accentuated in the writings of London. And while London's hobo and/or tramp is produced as the man unwilling to work, superficially following the discourses of tramp reform, his hobo/tramp speaks to a *resistant desiring*, one aimed directly against the industrial capitalist system, like that of the I.B.W.A., but with agency.

What I call the American Hobo-Sexual has historically occupied the periphery of competing discourses of knowledge regarding the hobo. Those same competing discourses appear simply oxymoronic until they collide and connect in the hobo/tramp productions of London. London's productions reappropriate the hobo's mobility, as well as invert the value of that mobility by emphasizing it as an epiphany—a *conscientious objecting to* on the hobo's part. In essence, London constructs the hobo as having a sense of agency. Discourses regarding the tramp's unwillingness (reform rhetoric) and the hobo's victimization (labor-agitation rhetoric) collide in the novel hero of the conscientious wanderer. It should be mentioned, as well, that editors in the late- nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries hesitated in publishing London's hobo/tramp fiction.[80] According to Etulain, American audiences of the time "were not yet willing to embrace the hobo as a hero," and, as well, London "was unable to produce a full-bodied tramp character" (22). Obviously, considering the discourses of knowledge regarding the hobo as a tramp, and the tramp as an unwilling citizen thwarting national progress, the hobo "was not an inspiring subject for teenage girls and coffee-table books—two of the unrefutable tests for measuring

[80] Etulain states that few leading publishers would publish fiction about tramps. Sketches and essays, however, were more successful. As mentioned earlier tramp fiction was published, but of a sensational and moral type.

acceptable fiction in the last years of the nineteenth century" (Etulain 21). Etulain argues as well that London's production of the hobo/tramp never consisted of "a convincingly-portrayed hobo" (22). He further explains that London's hobo/tramp characters "philosophize, speak in dialect, and spin yarns; but they are not actors. They do not *live* the characteristics ascribed to them" (22 emphasis added). In essence, London's hobo characters *lack* a kinetics. Of course, I read selections of London's essays, sketches and short fiction more generously, as well as collectively. Even within the superficial solitaire of 'Frisco Kid's monologues can be discerned the gestures and interjections of a social network that, as I argue, develops the hobo/tramp as both asocial and communal. So, too, the yarns spun in hobo aggregates end(?) with the hobo's *moving on*. But Etulain has a point. London's essays entail critiques of the industrial capitalist enterprise. However, "The Tramp Diary"—a sixty-five page[81] published journal that records his road trip across the West with Charles Kelly's Industrial Army in 1894—emphasizes "camaraderie" with men in a "predominant tone" of "merriment and adventure" (Etulain 23). But within this homosocial network of London's, despite its apparent absence, is also the hobo-sexual.

[81] I refer here to the original manuscript, recorded in a "small address book," "five inches wide, seven inches long, and one-half inch thick" (Etulain 29). Published in the Etulain edition, the manuscript consists of thirty pages.

## The American Hobo-Sexual: Power-Knowledge-Pleasure Production

London's "The Tramp Diary" projects the kinetics of the bonded brotherhood of hobos, their adventures as a fraternal posse marching to Washington, being ditched from boxcars or, even better, outwitting the bulls of the railways to get a free ride across America. Social critique and criticism are apparently absent from the autobiographical, or the actual tramping, of London. But located in what *is* emphasized—the hobo brotherhood—is the kinetics of the hobo-sexual. Located at the intersection of labor and sex discourses of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that manage nonproductive expenditure, the hobo-sexual moves against discourses on compulsory heterosexuality and, in the process, exposes hobo aggregates as male networks that privilege homosociality. This chapter focuses on the misogyny and homophobia that manage male-male relations and, in the process, exposes the sexed, raced and gendered bodies denied in American hobo history.

### Introducing the Hobo-Sexual

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues in *Between Men*, that homosociality privileges male-male relations, but is also always regulated and enabled by homophobia and misogyny. Discourses of fear and hatred represent sex-techs of compulsory heterosexuality that work asymmetrically to undervalue homosexuals and women. The male communal dimensions of the hobo—whether in the form of London's floating fraternity, membership in the I.B.W.A., or the contagion discussed by tramp reformers—exposes what Sedgwick deems an "erotic

triangle" (1-27) of male homosocial relations. Male homosociality occupies the apex; homophobia and misogyny represent the supporting base points. Discourses of knowledge-production regarding the hobo examined in the previous chapters make no overt references to the exploitation of women or to the fear of homosexual practices; however, inherent in the constructions of the male hobo aggregate are the veiled disciplinary mechanisms of a discourse on compulsory heterosexuality—the *management* of an unregulated, nonproductive sexual expenditure—within male homosocial privilege.

The hobo-sexual, occupying the intersection of a work ethic and a sexuality that overlap in what Georges Bataille calls *non-productive expenditure*, represents a kinetics that resists dominant discourses that manage desire. Rather than practicing means that result in accumulative ends, this queer site embodies practices indicative of means without profitable ends. The hobo-sexual represents a collision of not-for-profit work and sex practices that privileges what Rosemary Hennessy deems *outlawed needs* over production and possession—an historical figure, as Bataille notes, who has "a complete contempt for riches" and who often "refuses to work," making "life on the one hand an infinitely ruined splendor, and on the other, a silent insult to the laborious lie of the rich" (*Accursed Share* 76-77). The hobo-sexual signifies not only the intermittent labor made monstrous in dominant discourses of tramp reform, but also the *mis*-management of compulsory heterosexuality. Unlike American hobo history that promotes the homosocial at the expense of women and homosexuals, then, hobo-sexual history exposes these absences and enables their connections in queer material culture.

Of the multiple discourses that comprise the signification of the American hobo in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, London's hobo of resistance speaks to the *flicker of rebellion* required of the hobo-sexual—*a conscientious objecting to* dominant discourses that manage labor and sex. My mapping of the hobo-sexual, in other words, accentuates agency in such nonproductive practices. In this respect, while speaking to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's charting of desiring-machines that the theorists locate in the *molecular unconscious*, the hobo-sexual represents a *conscious recognition* of dominant discourses of desire and, like London's rebellious hobo, *refuses to accept* these rigid paradigms.[1] In fact, the actual production of the hobo-sexual is located in a collision between late Victorian discourses of sexuality and labor—dominant discourses that the hobo-sexual resignifies as *pre*dominant.[2]

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[1] Poststructural productions of desire, such as developed by Deleuze and Guattari, tend to develop a seemingly pure version of desire dependent on its location in the unconscious. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari deconstruct Freud's Oedipal complex as a capitalist device that blocks free-flowing desire at the molar level, for instance. In their anti-Oedipal construction, unfettered desire resembles the polysexuality of the infant yet to be interpellated by language and civilization—a distinct facet of Freud's paradigm of proper sexuality. In other words, while Deleuze and Guattari note that the molecular and molar are interdependent, in that they produce each other, the theorists persist on locating molecular desire in the unconscious. My mapping of the hobo-sexual locates molecular practice at the conscious level. My understanding is that, inherent in the *anti*-Oedipal mapped by Deleuze and Guattari is an actual recognition of and reaction to dominant discourses of desire at a level of consciousness. Likewise, in *Homosexual Desire*, Guy Hocquenghem celebrates male same-sex desire as having *failed* its sublimation within the same Freudian Oedipal construction; this failure, as well, represents cognizance. Hocquenghem, Deleuze and Guattari, therefore, note the conscientious objecting to dominant discourses that manage desire, but this consciousness is eclipsed by an emphasis on desire as a primordial and persistent intensity.

[2] In resignifying dominant discourse as *pre*dominant discourse, the hobo-sexual represents a cognizance of discursive constructions that predominantly organize desire and, in the process, a resistance to the domination of such discourse.

**Sexuality as Science**

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues against a totalitarian "repressive hypothesis" to define that which has maintained the discourse of sexuality since the seventeenth century (11). He also refuses to locate sexuality specifically in the realm of industrial capitalism and urban growth.[3] According to Foucault, the nineteenth century consisted of a burgeoning of discourses on sexuality, or a "talking sex" (77). Sexuality and sexualities proliferated. He maps the history of sexuality through a "*multiplicity* of discourses produced by a *series* of mechanisms" (33 my emphasis). Foucault contends that a shift in technique in forming discourses of sexuality occurred at the end of the eighteenth century—a shift from the "penitential practices of medieval Christianity," particularly that of the religious confession, to a "new technology of sex" in which the analysis of "the flesh" was replaced by the objectification of the "organism" (116-117). He explains that, by the mid-nineteenth century, sex had already been the product of pedagogy and medicine, as well as economics. It was then "isolated" from the body within the field of medicine, rendering the production of a sexual "'instinct'" that could be deemed responsible for "anomalies . . . derivations . . . infirmities . . . or pathological processes" (117). Using the publication of

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[3] See "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in which John D'Emilio considers the migration of bodies from the family homestead to industrial centers as significant in producing gay urban aggregates and, in the process, gay identity. D'Emilio argues that the shift from rural to industrial centers, as well as the free-labor system, led to individuals leaving the rural and more agriculturally based nuclear family that once provided all economic necessities. As capitalism commodified "most goods and services . . . need[ed] for survival," family members gravitated toward urban centers, which, according to D'Emilio, actually "weakened" the nuclear family structure. The anonymity of urban centers actually enhanced homosexual practice, but, at the same time, the destabilization of the nuclear family caused by capitalism's emphasis on industrialization had to be reconsidered and reestablished. According to D'Emilio, "lesbians, gay men and heterosexual feminists," not capitalism, became the "scapegoats" that would speak back to the reestablishment of the nuclear family (268).

Heinrich Kaan's *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1846 as an historical indicator, Foucault parallels the "opening up" of the medico-psychological disciplines with the production of the "'perversions'" that, in turn, link to an administration of sex that required the social body place itself "under surveillance" (116). In essence, these discourses that produced the sex instinct, as well as the perversions, also implemented a social technology—the *management* of sex. Particularly in the realm of heredity, discourses of sex multiplied; it mattered to inquire about sex, speak it, label it, and control it for the sake of the species. The discursive series of "perversion-heredity-degenerescence," according to Foucault, "formed the solid nucleus of the new technologies of sex" in the nineteenth century and, as well, took the form of "a state-directed racism" (118, 119). Foucault maintains, for instance, that the "medicine of perversions and the programs of eugenics" represent "the two great innovations" with regard to technologies of sex in the late Victorian era (118). The production of perversions and eugenics consistently referred back to each other. These sex-tech discourses merged perversion and eugenics in order to explain and manage "how a heredity . . . burdened with various maladies . . . ended by producing a sexual pervert," as well as how a sexual perversion "resulted in the depletion of one's line of descent" (118). This technological discursive series, then, produced the sexual pervert as both cause and effect of degeneracy.

Developing particularly in Britain and Europe as early as the 1870s and by the 1890s heavily influencing North America, the discipline of sexology generated a discursive series that shifted the power-knowledge regarding

sexuality from the church to the field of medicine. While the actual term sexology was not "coined" until the early-twentieth century, such practitioners of classifying and individualizing sexual practices and desires as Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis published sexological discourse in the nineteenth century that, inevitably, led to the production of "pathologized individual identities" as Foucault has suggested (Bland and Doan 2). Particularly the historical British production of the Labouchère Amendment that criminalized "acts of 'gross indecency'" between men in 1885, as well as the publicized trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895, stimulated extensive debates internationally over homosexuality and its criminalization (qt. in Doan and Waters 42). Sexology's combination of biology, anthropology and the individual case study that incorporated familial history was considered "evidence of sexual phenomena" in these debates (Bland and Doan 2). The sexologists' term *sexual inversion* signified an arrangement of deviant sexual behaviors that not only produced the homosexual as a distinct typology of the perverted, but, in the same process, the heterosexual as normal and, therefore, valued. Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) maps sexual inversion, for instance, as a "manifestation of functional degeneration" (45), and the author wrote this text with the specific intention that it be used as a "handbook to assist courts in understanding crime" (Bland and Doan 2).

On the other hand, both Ellis and Carpenter worked against discursive productions of homosexuality as pathological. In its very insistence that same-sex desire be decriminalized, however, Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, vol.*

*II: Sexual Inversion* (1897) develops such an argument against criminalization by contesting that same-sex desire be considered an *irregularity* produced naturally within the human species, that homosexuality consists of a "congenital anomaly" unable to be cured because the "tendency is deeply rooted in an organic inborn temperment" (57). As Laura Doan and Chris Waters argue, sexology studies, such as those authored by Krafft-Ebing, Ellis and Carpenter, "established a new taxonomy of 'deviant' sexual behaviour predicated upon the presumed existence of a normative heterosexuality" (41). Carpenter, in *The Intermediate Sex* (1896), expands upon the third-sex model developed by German sexologist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs to argue that inverts represent a natural "Intermediate race" (50). Initiating his discussion, Carpenter employs the "arrival of the New Woman amongst us" (48) as a contemporary example of the deconflation of sex and gender, allowing for the overlap and exchange of traditionally gendered *emotions*. While the invert produced by Carpenter consists of an interpellated subject[4] with "special affectional temperment" (49), the author warns that to understand this temperment as "necessarily sexual, or [as] connected with sexual acts" is to make "a great mistake" (49). Carpenter, instead, emphasizes the emotional aspects of the "more normal and perfect types" of invert (50).

Both Ellis and Carpenter, in their arguments to decriminalize same-sex practice, map a variety of inversion. Ellis argues that there exists a range of this *anomaly* in that "many persons" maintain a "predisposition to inversion which always remains latent and unaroused" while in others "the *instinct* is so strong

[4] In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," Althusser notes that ideology acts as a mechanism that hails or interpellates individuals and, in the process, produces these individuals as ideological subjects.

that it forces its own way in spite of all obstacles" (57 emphasis added). As well, Carpenter develops the "extreme and exaggerated types of the [intermediate] race" (50). The *excessive* male invert, writes Carpenter, is unattractive, "distinctly effeminate . . . sentimental, lackadaisical, mincing in gait and manners . . . a chatterbox, skilful at the needle and in woman's work, sometimes taking pleasure in dressing in women's clothes" and, as well, has a body with "a tendency toward the feminine," meaning "large at the hips, supple, not muscular, the face wanting in hair, the voice inclining to be high-pitched" (50). Additionally, in "his affection, too, [the excessive male invert] is often feminine in character, clinging, dependent and jealous, as of one desiring *to be loved* almost more than to love" (50 emphasis added). Likewise, his "dwelling-room is orderly in the extreme" (50). Regardless of their intentions to advocate for the decriminalization of homosexuality, then, in these passages above, Ellis locates non-normative heterosexual practice in either the passive or aggressive individual *instinct*, while Carpenter maps the homosexual as a *species*. As outlined by Foucault in the *History of Sexuality*:

> Sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. . . . Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of

> sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. (43)

This particular passage, while quoted often, according to David Halperin, represents one of the least understood of Foucault's assertions. Halperin contends that many readers of Foucualt's mapping of sodomy in the pre-industrial era to his charting of homosexuality in the nineteenth century misrecognize this shift as simply one from *act* to *identity*. Rather, argues Halperin, the shift from *forbidden acts* to *forms of sexuality* need be understood as an extensive "reorganization" of practices as discursive sexualities (45), that Foucault's emphasis consists of one on Victorian discursive technologies that "insist on the *conjunction* of sexual morphology and sexual subjectivity: they presume a convergence in the sexual actor of a deviant personal style with a deviant erotic desire" (Halperin 57). In the (American) colonial period, for example, the theocratic emphasis was on reproduction and the family; reproduction meant population and a required work force while the emphasis on the family attempted to manage the potential epidemic of illegitimate children that could drain colonies of resources (D'Emilio and Freedman 142). The criminal act of sodomy, at this time, referred not to homosexuality per se, but to any "nonprocreative . . . sexual acts . . . performed between two men, a man and an animal . . . or between a man and a woman" (D'Emilio and Freedman 154). And, as noted by John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, because particular sexual acts "clearly defied the norm of reproductive sexuality, the crimes of sodomy, buggery, and bestiality carried the death penalty"

(154). These crimes of sexual expenditure required "proof of penetration" and at least two eye-witness accounts for capital punishment, however, which "limited the application" of death (155). Regardless of the punishment for non-productive sexual expenditure—whether in the form of death, fines, or whippings—criminal sexual acts during the colonial period were generalized under the canopy term of nonprocreative while their perpetrators were comprehensively labelled sinners. The acts, labels, and punishments, however, except in the case of death, were, likewise, deemed temporary. In essence, despite a history of sexual offenses, as long as colonists "accepted punishment . . . for transgressions" they could "remain citizen[s] in good standing" (141).

Foucault's mapping of the shift from sodomy to the homosexual in the nineteenth century represents a distinct alteration from a generalized understanding of the nonprocreative act and its punishment to the more specified and various discursive productions of sexuality, as opposed to sexual acts, in the nineteenth century. As Halperin has noted, the late-Victorian production of sexuality consists of the mapping of an interdependent relation between *deviant erotic desire* and a *deviant personal style* that merge in the sexual subject. Historical documentation regarding sodomy in colonial New England and the Chesapeake refrains from including specifics, other than listing the non-productive sexual act and actor(s), while nineteenth-century sexology individualizes the homosexual instinct as deviant within the heterosexual-homosexual binary and, simultaneously, produces the homosexual as an *interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul*—a sexual monster of blurred binaries.

Carpenter's production of the excessive male invert, for instance, consists of a connected series in the discursive production of sexual deviance, yet extends beyond any sexual act. Deviant erotic desire, deviant physiognomy, deviant labor, and deviant surroundings converge in Carpenter's extreme version of the male invert. And, ironically, this overarching deviance is reliant on and produced within a strict and fixed gender binary, which Carpenter attempts to revise in order to naturalize the *more normal and perfect types* of inverts.[5]

**Masculinity Lost and Recovered**

Carpenter adorns the excessive male invert overtly in feminine characteristics, but particularly critical is the pervert's practice *to be loved*—or as the passive recipient of another's desire. The key to Carpenter's rhetoric, I would argue, is that it does not emphasize the male anatomy of *another's desire* complemented by the invert's desire, but instead underscores the distinctly male invert's passive and, therefore, deemed-feminine objective position in sexual practice. Considering the prevalent discourse of social Darwinism in the nineteenth century—a discourse that claimed the human species progressive in that it demonstrated significant difference between genders—Carpenter's excessive male invert threatens such a distinction and speaks to a potential crisis in fixed definitions of nineteenth-century masculinity. As Doan and Waters mention, sexological studies concentrated on men far more than women (41), and,

[5] Carpenter's scholarship works predominantly to release the invert from decriminalization by mapping a sexual continuum of sorts. My specific focus on his production of the excessive male invert does not speak to this considerable continuum, but instead allows me to map how gender influences the excessive, which I develop throughout this chapter.

as Kevin Mumford further asserts, discursive productions of American masculinity that connect to sexuality extended beyond medical discourse by circulating regularly in popular culture.

American nineteenth-century public discourse often represented technologies of sexuality, not unlike those of labor reform, that fuelled discourses of anxiety and reinscribed the fear of nonproductive expenditure. Mumford argues, for example, that in any copy of the nineteenth-century's popular *National Police Gazette*, a reader could "usually find two or three pages of sexual advertising" (75). In the *National Police Gazette*, sexuality spoke to the reader in the form of abnormality, industrial conditioning, and anxiety, which, by way of binary logic, actually produced the *proper* sexual citizen. Answers to one particular sexual ailment of modernization suffered by men could be found in the commodity, such as the remedy found in "Brown's capsules" that ensured a limited loss of sperm; the oral agent was used for "stopping the drains within 48 hours" (89). Understood as limited in its supply, sperm became associated with masculinity and, therefore, needed to be managed.[6] These late nineteenth-century discourses regarding the need to keep genital fluid in reserve speak directly to how productions of bourgeois sexuality paralleled a market economy that prioritized and rewarded an accumulation of goods and resources, as well as a phallic economy that equated masculinity with reason and will and, in the process, reinscribed femininity as its polar opposite.

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[6] Krafft-Ebing notes that sexual inversion is a cause of impotency. In reference to female inversion, he notes that "sexual inversion does not affect woman in the same manner as it does man, for it does not render woman impotent" (*Psychopathia Sexualis* 45).

According to Mumford, sexual advertisements of the times employed such terms as "nervous disability," "youthful indiscretions," and "lost manhood" that predominantly signified impotence (75). In the 1880s physicians connected impotence to "overcivilization" in both men and women, but the female version was soon eclipsed by an emphasis on the womb and reproduction as entirely separate from desire.[7] Physicians argued that, while "civilized men" (read: urban, white and bourgeois) were "superior" to other groups of men, they were also more susceptible to sexual impotence (77). Middle-class modernization had an ugly underside to its progressive nature; the fast-paced industrial lifestyle of the late-nineteenth century had been deemed degenerative, but in this instance only for those who could *afford* its excess, or an *over*civilization that resulted from *the pursuit of profit*. Mumford argues that this discursive connection between "civilized superiority and sexual vulnerability" generated a crisis with respect to masculinity (77). Male impotence became a marker of a lack of will-power first, a marker of mis-procreation subsequently. After all, the sexual instinct, if left unchecked by reason and will, resorted to its primitive mode, suggesting that the impotent middle-class male, only because of a lack of will, would misspend his physical energies in nervousness, and, in turn, his genital fluid reserve would be depleted along with his race.

With the technological separation of sexuality from reproduction came "the increase in prescriptive literature . . . that discussed nonprocreative sexual

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[7] Krafft-Ebing notes that one of the sources of "homosexual love" in the female is "automasturbation" which leads to "neurasthenia and its evil consequences." Specifically, in "sexually neurasthenic females," the act of kissing and embracing a woman leads to "ejaculation" (*Psychopathia Sexualis* 45-46).

behavior," including physician Benjamin Rush's *Medical Inquiries and Observations, Upon Diseases of the Mind*, that argues the sexual appetite, "when *excessive*, becomes a disease of both the body and the mind" (qt. in Mumford 80, emphasis added). Excessive sexual desire and practice were deemed a disability that, if left unmanaged, depleted the nervous system and rendered the body more susceptible to other diseases, such as impotency (80). In 1853, Claude-Francois Lallemand's *A Practical Treatise on the Causes, Symptoms, and Treatment of Spermatorrhoea* appeared translated in the United States. Lallemand reported that "masturbation, foreplay, illicit thoughts, and extramarital sexual relations" led to spermatorrhoea, which resulted in various debilities, particularly "continual and involuntary genital secretions" thought to cause impotency (qt. in Mumford 80).

Discourses regarding impotence directly produced the guidelines associated with male sexual misconduct and its deemed opposite—masculinity. Impotency (and masculinity) could be *managed* by reserving genital secretions. Any secretions caused by excessive or nonproductive expenditure were associated with the bourgeois male's lack of self-control. According to Mumford, the discourses of knowledge regarding impotence in men corresponded to the movement of "male youth to the city" (81). Mumford argues that, with a range of mobility and financial independence, these men threatened traditional hierarchical systems with their potential autonomy, as well as their nonproductive sexual appetites that were deemed a "potential sexual disorder" (81). Within this same time frame, New York City neurologist George M. Beard popularized the disorder "neurasthenia"—a term suggestive of the malfunctioning body caused by a

modernized and *over*civilized culture (81). According to Beard, the "'necessity of punctuality,'" "'railway travel,'" and the "'disorderly city'" resulted in an excessive nervous condition that could deplete the body of its essentials (84 qt. in Mumford). In *Sexual Neurasthenia*[8] Beard maps sexual neurasthenia, as opposed to spinal, cerebral, and/or digestive neurasthenia (from which middle-class women could suffer), as the most prevalent of the disorders found predominantly in nineteenth-century American middle-class men, which caused alarm since physicians understood the body as a "closed-system" with a scarce and finite reserve of energy (Mumford 84).[9]

Nineteenth-century discursive productions of sexuality, therefore, resulted in and were buttressed by a series of disciplinary mechanisms that both established the binary of heterosexual and homosexual, as well as complemented and reinscribed the already-existent masculine and feminine dichotomy. Both Carpenter's excessive male invert and the nineteenth-century popular preoccupation with impotence as a symbol of lost manhood hinge on assumptive, stable constructions of femininity. While Carpenter's mapping of the excessive male invert is rather obvious in its feminine construction, perhaps less overt are the traditionally feminine-qualifiers noted in the conception of impotence as a result of *nervousness* and *a lack* of self-control, *will* power and *reason*, as well as the association of excessive and nonprocreative sexual practice with the *primitive* and the ignorance of *youth*.

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[8] Beard's *Sexual Neurasthenia* was published in 1884 by his colleague A.D. Rockwell after Beard's death in 1882 (Mumford 84).

[9] This same medical paradigm has been deemed the "spermatic economy" by G. J. Baker who notes that nineteenth-century medical practitioners thought of genital secretions as limited and in need of reserve (qtd. in Mumford 84).

**Classed Sexuality**

Foucault insists that the historic deployment of sexuality functioned as a technology to maximize "life" for the Victorian bourgeoisie—that the discursive series of *perversion-heredity-degenerescence* should be understood as "the self-affirmation of one class" that preoccupied itself with an "indefinite extension of strength, vigor, health, and life" (125). According to Lucy Bland and Laura Doan, in the late-nineteenth century, the nation-states still considered sexual knowledge "dangerous" and, therefore, "pressured" the early sexologists to "ensure" their research would circulate only amongst "experts in the fields of medicine and law" (2), yet the demand for information regarding human physiology by the bourgeois general public rendered these "attempts to withhold" sexology literature "from a larger readership" frequent failures (3). While the aristocracy discerned the distinctiveness of its body in blood—that of ancestral lines and alliances—the bourgeoisie produced discourses on sexuality and a body based on such technologies. In essence, "the bourgeoisie's 'blood' was its sex" (Foucault 124). The bourgeois body, then, was a specifically *classed* body in that, initially, unlike the bodies of the working class and poor, the bourgeois body was *acknowledged* as possessing a body and a sex.

Foucault argues that "conflicts were necessary" before the exploited classes were "granted a body and a sexuality" (126). Such conflicts consisted of the problems associated with urban proximity, including outbreaks and contamination, the contagion of prostitution and venereal disease, as well as

"economic emergencies" that required a "stable and competent labor force" (126). An implementation of technical machinery—in the forms of "schooling, the politics of housing, public hygiene, institutions of relief and insurance, and the general medicalization of the population"—sustained the surveillance necessary for the introduction of "the deployment of sexuality into the exploited class" (Foucault 126). In what is now considered the first wave of *mass* immigration to the United States (1840-1890), nearly fifteen million immigrants arrived on U.S. soil; in the second wave (1891-1920) approximately eighteen million immigrated (Vecoli 358-361).[10] Considering the economic panics of 1819, 1837, and 1857, as well as the economic depressions between 1839-1843, 1873-1879, 1882-1885, and 1893-1896 (Lindstrom 183), the American nineteenth century became a breeding ground for the conflicts of which Foucault speaks, particularly in urban areas where population increased from 5.1% in 1790 to 25.7% by 1870 (Sugrue 794). The combination of dense urban spaces and violent labor agitation, as well as a discourse of knowledge regarding venereal disease as a transgenerational ailment able to infect the nation's children through the mother,[11] led local, state,

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[10] The first wave of immigration consisted primarily of German, Irish, British and Scandinavian citizens. (While Irish immigration took place before and after 1840, allegedly it was those who fled the "Great Hunger" or famine who were objectified and produced as the negative stereotype that would haunt the Irish as a sub-race for centuries in the U.S., allegedly only displaced from that role with the end of slavery and the emancipation of African-Americans. Also, in the 1860s Irish immigration consisted primarily of young females, usually single.) This first wave of immigrants replaced many of the native-born "factory girls," such as those historically associated with Lowell, Massachusetts, who walked off the job in protest to a reduction in wages in 1834. The second wave of immigration consisted primarily of Italians and those from Austria-Hungary and Russia. Canadian and Chinese immigrants numbered fewer and were predominantly transient residents, drawn to the country by the Gold Rush of 1849. Unlike Canadians, however, the Chinese, only estimated at 200,000 in number, became products of a discourse of anxiety that led to their being understood as "morally degenerate pagans" and, in turn, the victims of such violence as mob lynchings (Vecoli). See also Pfiefer for racial violence toward Chinese laborers.

[11] According to David Langum, prostitution increased in urban areas around 1820 with the increase in industrialization and the anonymity associated with city life. The suppression of

and federal governments to produce permanent boards to survey public health concerns as early as 1866.[12]

According to Foucault, however, the deployment of sexuality "does not operate in symmetrical fashion with respect to the social classes" (127). Instead, while he argues that these technologies and multiple discourses of knowledge regarding sexuality do emanate "from a hegemonic center" of narratives fuelled by bourgeois self-interest, Foucault also argues that "there is a bourgeois sexuality, and that there are *class sexualities*. Or rather, that sexuality is originally, historically bourgeois, and that, in its successive shifts and transpositions, it induces specific *class effects*" (127 emphasis added). What I label the hobo-sexual consists of one of these *classed* effects. Mapped as an intersection of work and sex practices of nonproductive expenditure, hobo-sexual practice represents a desiring-*not*-for-accumulation, -reserve, and -investment.[13] Hobo-sexual practices represent, instead, the unmapable in that the combination of transience and temporality challenge the charting of *normal* behavior. These practices are fleeting, spontaneous, flexible, and, most importantly, temporary.

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prostitution (in brothels and out of the public eye) began in the 1890s with the British crusader William T. Stead. Tied to prostitution was venereal disease, which would, by way of the husband, infect his wife and, therefore, their future children.

[12] Stuart Galishoff refers here to New York's first Metropolitan Board of Health, established in 1866.

[13] I use the construction "desiring-not-for..." because hobos are affected by discourses on proper practices, such as monogamy, heterosexuality, private property, etc. With the wealth of discourse regarding proper desire circulating in the nineteenth century, it is doubtful that any citizen completely by-passed the map of the status quo. In this respect, I want to clarify that I am not using an essentialist argument, that hobo-sexuals naturally follow some sense of untainted, pure desire. Instead, the point to be made is that the hobo-sexual chooses this anti-national life-style. I speak, therefore, of the hobo who chooses to quit a job, chooses to traverse the country, and chooses multiple sexual partners without fear of the future. Those hobos who have been forced onto the road would not, unless their consciousness changed into this anti-accumulative/anti-reserve attitude while on the road, be considered hobo-sexual.

They are, with reference to the maps produced for bourgeois sexuality, as well as a national work ethic, the Other.

In the American imaginary, fueled by the medico-psychological disciplines of the nineteenth century that taxonomized bodies—their histories, their practices—into a map of cause and effect, the bodies of hobo-sexual practice—consisting of less repetitive, more spontaneous and fleeting associations with work and sex—are produced as abnormal and perverse in their desire for mobility, represented by the labels of dromomania and wanderlust understood as pathological in the hobo/tramp, for instance. Not unlike the production of the homosexual who had been morphed into a personage, the hobo-sexual, under the rubric of nineteenth-century discursive technologies of sexuality and labor, began to be figured as a nonproductive *classed* species in need of objectification, surveillance, and displacement.

The objectification of the hobo consisted of socio-psycho-medico surveillance that took place predominantly in lodging houses and jails. One may recall, for instance, the list of ailments, including venereal disease, that were catalogued by physicians and government employees with regard to the tramp. While Foucault argues against any single, totalitarian reading of that which sustains discourses of sexuality, he does not refute that industrial capitalism plays a crucial role in many master narratives of sexuality in the nineteenth century, but that the technologies that support and buttress industrial capitalism's investment in sexuality, just as the repressive hypothesis, need be considered only part of the multiple series known as the history of sexuality. As Foucault has strongly

suggested, in other words, in the history of sexuality *class matters*. Discourse that catalogues the venereal disease of hobos/tramps, for instance, was employed to mark the tramp with contagion and to buttress the ideologies associated with ill fate to those who make poor choices. These catalogues were not used to map the sexual practices of the tramp. Instead, these statistics fueled reform discourses that highlighted labor, or the sub-group's inability or refusal to perform work, as the primary reason tramps existed in the first place. The emphasis on labor, in other words, eclipsed the emphasis on tramp sexual practice in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

With regard to class, published references to neurasthenia produced a different discourse of knowledge. Mumford notes that sexual authorities of the nineteenth century often understood impotence and sexual neurasthenia in terms of social Darwinism.[14] While white middle-class men were especially susceptible to the disorder of sexual neurasthenia, white men employed in the working class were "largely immune from the disorder" (86).[15] In Beard's opinion, white working-class men had been born with a resolve that engendered a natural immunity to the disorder of sexual neurasthenia. Because they performed acts of an assumed *perpetual* physical labor, the "'muscle worker'" maintained an "'old-fashioned constitution'" which resulted in "'rarely or never'" an injury to the nervous system (qtd. in Mumford 86). According to Mumford, the strong and fit laborer became the ideal for those suffering from nervousness; physicians might

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[14] Mumford mentions briefly Beard's reference to Herbert Spencer as a "close friend" (85).
[15] Middle-class white women, while objectified as reproducers, were considered to suffer from particular types of nervousness and, therefore, particular strains of neurasthenia. Sexual neurasthenia, however, was not considered to affect these women. However, Krafft-Ebing references sexual neurasthenia in the lesbian in *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

prescribe rest for their patients in particular cases, but "most reformers of manhood, however, addressed the problem . . . by promoting physical exercise or *manly* work" (87 emphasis added).

It is crucial to note that while the *employed* working-class male laborer became the ideal body to keep pace with the modernization of the United States, the hobo—deemed a tramp and criminal in nineteenth-century reform discourse—had been pigeon-holed into a place of arrested development. According to Mumford, it was believed that "certain groups ceased to evolve" (86). The consequences of such a stifled existence led to "criminal behavior, lower intelligence, and diminished inhibitions," and individuals or group-types of this sort "lacked the capacity to control their impulses, particularly their sexual instincts" (86). This discourse of knowledge allowed the middle-class white male to be produced as the predominant body capable of suffering from sexual neurasthenia and the only subject capable of the will-power and reason to overcome the disorder. For "incontinent men were likely to be found wanting in virtually all *manly* endeavors, especially in *the pursuit of profit*," or, as one physician stated, "'Everyday employment should be . . . a necessity. A man who is lazy . . . is nearly always a licentious man'" (qtd. in Mumford 82, emphasis added). It is here, then, where discourses of sexuality and work collide. In this space reside hobo-sexual practices—practices, according to the popular discourses of neurasthenia, lacking in masculinity.

In mapping the hobo-sexual, kinetics are crucial, but it is the mobility of the hobo that is continuously absent from much discourse. Complementary to

discourses regarding gender and sex, bourgeois socio-medico-productions reduce the unskilled laborer to the either/or construction of *either* ideal worker complete with an assumed compulsory heterosexuality that stabilized the reproduction of capitalist ideology, *or* the lazy and licentious denizen that threatens the nation. This production of only two choices speaks, yet again, to a binary logic that tends to reduce the complexities of subjectivity and sexual desire to a discursive system of polar opposite and absolute identities. Binarized medico-logic, in particular cases, promotes *movement between poles*, particularly the movement from sexual Other to proper sexual Subject by way of reform (whether the white-bourgeois-male map to reserve genital secretions or the chartered course of labor as the remedy for the working class white male), but it dismisses the *conscientious objecting to* these fixed identities as simply pathological. These same absolutes, however, collide in the figure of the hobo, and, in the process, the hobo reveals the inconsistencies of sex-technologies and the inability of such medico-discourse to speak to any subject position that *moves beyond* these absolute categories, for at any moment the hobo may signify the ideal employed laborer and the lethargic tramp.

**Masculinity, Sex and Labor Reform**

By redeploying queer as a temporal practice of *resistant-desiring* in the figure of the hobo-sexual, my objective is to refrain from organizing hobo-sexual desire into any fixed identities of homosexual or heterosexual. Rather, my reasoning behind developing the hobo-sexual as a form of queer practice is to

highlight the inconsistent and unpredictable *resistant-desiring* of such a figure, as well as the *temporality* of such a resistant-desiring. In anticipation of the argument that any resistant practice consists of a *resistance to something* and, therefore, is always-already involved in a binary schematic, I willingly admit that hobo-sexual practice reacts to and resists compulsory heterosexuality and the pursuit of profit valued in a capitalist work ethic. But I would likewise maintain that these same hobo-sexual practices that resist master narratives of work and sex speak to *a variety of practices*. In other words, reacting against discursive productions that value stability, accumulation, and repeated performance does not necessitate a limited scope of reactive practice. The initial reaction is a product of binary logic, but the practices that stem from such a reaction are not determined by a logic of either/or. Rather, hobo-sexual practice is determined by its kinetics, by the spontaneous collisions and connections engendered in movement.

In bourgeois-medico rhetoric and popular culture, these same hobo-sexual kinetics are arrested at a fixed state of degeneresence. The most popular productions of the hobo/tramp in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, particularly in times of economic panic, emphasized discourses of anxiety in the form of a national epidemic of degeneresence. The contagion stemmed from the figures of the criminal and lazy denizen—the nonproductive citizen in need of labor reform. Likewise, within discourses of bourgeois-medico sexuality, the hobo/tramp occupied a similar position. In accordance with Foucault's statement of *classed sexualities*, the tramp—the criminal, the lazy denizen—represented sexual excess, an unbridled licentiousness tempered only by labor. Oddly

enough, however, the hobo/tramp *while employed* represented, as well, the *ideal modern man*—one whom Beard's patients strove to emulate in particular practices.[16] It is within this collision of discourses regarding proper bourgeois sexual practice where inconsistencies surface with regard to the hobo. Medical discourse produces its own oxymoronic tension. On the one hand, there is an overt distinction between the employed laborer and the lazy criminal-tramp; on the other hand, the hobo actually consists of both figures/practices. As mentioned previously, Anderson argues that the hobo may actually represent, over the course of time, the seasonal harvester, the tramp, the bum, etc. Yet this mobility with regard to both sex and work practices—this temporal difference—goes unrecognized and unaccounted for in medical and labor-as-reform discourse. These same medico-discursive productions promote the ability of the white male bourgeois body to change and alter by way of *reason* and *will*, but do so only by opposing this ability with the static degenerate status of more exploited bodies complete with *abnormal, primitive instincts*. Cultural capital is earned, in essence, through the comparative and fixed model of binary logic that underscores procreative sexual practice as valued, but only the bourgeois white male maintains capital reserve.

Discourse regarding the hobo's mobility in identity and kinetic space, as well as how that mobility affected the sexual practices of the hobo, requires a

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[16] I refer here to Mumford's mapping of remedies for neurasthenia. In prescribing "physical exercise" and "manly work," physicians noted the benefits of hard labor, specifically the labor performed by the "muscle worker" (87). While employed, the hobo performed the physical labor inherent in ditch digging, seasonal harvesting, lumbering, and railroad construction and maintenance. The hobo's employment, then, speaks to the same type of physical labor prescribed for middle-class men suffering from sexual neurasthenia.

peripheral gaze.[17] Clues to hobo-sexuality occupy the tables and charts of nineteenth-century medical discourse, but typically only in the form of statistics on venereal disease as mentioned in the previous chapter. The emphasis on hobo/tramp (re)production consists of an emphasis not on procreation, but on contagion, as outlined by such reformers as Flynt who argue for the separation of tramps while incarcerated. As well, with reference to the procreative paradigm, London actually refers to the hobo/tramp as "self-eliminating" ("The Tramp" 135). He writes of the hobo/tramp, "It is necessary that his kind cease with him, that his progeny shall not be, that he play the eunuch's part. . . . And he plays it. He does not breed. Sterility is his portion" (135).

While London fails to develop further the reasoning behind such a ubiquitous sterility of the hobo/tramp, it is most probable that the author, as does medical discourse, emphasizes venereal disease in this passage. Yet, considering Mumford's argument regarding the crisis of masculinity developed in medical and popular culture of the nineteenth century, London's passage speaks, as well, to the emasculation of the same figure. While *manly* endeavors signify *the pursuit of profit* with regard to the middle-class male, the hobo/tramp produced as eunuch signifies a symbolic castration. Indeed, the hobo/tramp, while discursively produced primarily as white and anatomically male, *lacks* the phallus. Not unlike Carpenter's mapping of the excessive male invert, the hobo/tramp—the lazy denizen prone to crime—is feminized. The hobo/tramp can regain some cultural

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[17] Popular discourse does not highlight the hobo's alteration from tramp, bum, etc., nor does it accentuate the queer sexual practices of hobos. With regard to late-nineteenth hobos (noted as tramps) I have had to locate markers of sexual activity in the tables, charts and appendixes of medical discourse predominantly.

capital on the phallic economy through work as sex-work-reform-remedy, however. As Mumford argues, the working-class-*employed* laborer represents a body complete with an alleged natural immunity to overcivilization. It can, therefore, be deduced that this ideal worker, while denied capital in the form of resources and privilege, is assumed in medical discourse to perform an inexcessive and regulated sexuality—one of compulsory heterosexuality that privileges male desire, a productive and inexcessive male desire that medico-bourgeois discourse values. In essence, the *employed* hobo/tramp, while denied capital, can regain the cultural capital of masculinity in the phallic economy, for the *employed* worker also serves a *negative function* within capitalist regimes.

According to these sex-tech discourses, the employed hobo is not only no longer associated with the tramp of eugenics discourse—no longer the object of national distress, reform, displacement and dismissal—but, as well, is no longer the object of a *mis-managed* sexual instinct. Interesting to note, however, is that, even under the rubric of ideal worker, the employed hobo is denied all forms of sexual neurasthenia since the disease results from *overcivilization* and *the pursuit of profit*. This particular discourse of sexuality, therefore, consists of a trip-tick technology: it equates employed labor with an assumed proper and inexcessive heterosexuality, reinscribes the fixed gender binary system, and contains the working-class in a hierarchical structure of class relations.

**Hobo-Sexuality**

In redeploying queer as non-productive expenditure, the hobo-sexual signifies a variety of resistant-desiring practices. With specific regard to the hobo's history of sexuality, Anderson states that, when he "'goes the limit,'" the hobo "may have a hundred reasons for going to town, but the major reason, whether he admits it or not, is to meet women" (142). "Not a marrying man," writes Anderson, "the hobo has few *ideal* associations with women" (142 emphasis added). Anderson argues that the hobo's "sex relations are *naturally* illicit" (142 emphasis added). Although the "fortunate hobos find women who will take them in during the winter months without requiring 'the marriage rite,'" the majority of hobos "are as transient in their attachments to women as to their jobs" (140) and find the "only accessible women are prostitutes" (142). Like most hobo purchases, however, this sexual practice of the hobo is a means without an accumulative end; it is based in pleasure and rarely, if ever, leads to a recurrent relationship of intimate exchange precisely because of the hobo's transience. The transient sexual relations the hobo has with women, predominantly prostitutes, represent a queer sexual practice on the part of the hobo. While Anderson's reference to the hobo's sexual practices as *naturally illicit* is problematic in that it speaks to a social Darwinism, this particular hobo practice is based in sexual desire, consists of multiple partners usually previously unknown to the hobo, and represents a spontaneous encounter between bodies. Granted, the hobo may very well intend to buy sex from a prostitute, may very well know on which street prostitutes gather, but, like hobo aggregates, this

relative stability in the form of urban knowledge also comes with the instability of specific bodies. While some hobos do find women to take them in during the winter months, and we can deduce from this that sexual activity takes place between the hobo and the woman in her domicile, Anderson suggests that the majority of hobos practice sexual desire through paid encounters with prostitutes—street walkers whose identities are unknown (and probably unimportant) to the hobo client. These sexual practices, then, represent a form of anonymous and urban sex as opposed to personal intimacy. The hobo's sexual encounters with multiple prostitutes (over a period of time and in various places) consist of practices that move assumptively against the procreative function of the female body, as well as the discursive production of the conflation of love and sex.

Further research into the hobo's sexual practices confirms that homosexual activity affects the lives of most hobos. While researchers may disagree on the number of homosexual hobos and the reasons for such a sexual desire, they do agree on a homosexual presence within the hobohemias of any city. Appendix A of Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, for instance, includes the published correspondence between Ellis and a self-identified "male invert" who claims that there is no distinction between the tramps and hobos of the United States, England, Scotland, and Wales in regard to homosexual practices. "Among both these classes," he writes, "90 percent or I even would be bold enough to say 100 percent indulge in homosexuality when the opportunity occurs" (365). Within this same appendix is a piece entitled

"Homosexuality Among Tramps" by the popular socio-journalist Flynt who claims that "every hobo in the United States knows what 'unnatural intercourse' means, talking about it freely, and, according to my finding, every tenth man practices it, and defends his conduct." Flynt, however, then reduces this prevalent homosexual desire, emphasizing only power-play pedophilia. "Boys are the victims of this passion," he writes and continues to explain that hobos "gain possession of these boys," who are "slum children," by seducing them with stories of the road and "caresses" (360) The hobo and the boy are relabelled "jocker" and "prushun" once initiated into this practice, and once on the road, each "prushun . . . is compelled by hobo law to let his jocker do with him as he will" (Flynt "Homosexuality" 361).[18] Flynt further reiterates the non-consensual power-relations between prushun and jocker with references to "terrible stories of the physical results to the boy of anal intercourse" (360-61). He does not, however, further develop any of these results within his correspondence with Ellis.

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[18] According to Allsop, the jocker is also known as a "wolf" in hobo speak. Likewise, the prushun is regarded as "lamb," "punk," and "fruiter." These intergenerational relationships were made "edible to the public at large" in such hobo representations as Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* of 1921. Allsop argues that the film eclipses homosexual practice by focusing on the punk as apprentice, rather than the run-away poor boy who has been accosted for the sexual pleasures of his adult wolf. The boy's actions (breaking windows) lead to the adult hobo's work (window repair), and the two share the wages. Chaplin explained this relationship in *The Kid* as one where "'the kid and tramp live together, having all sorts of adventures!'" In fact, when he approached Jackie Coogan's father about having Jackie play the boy hobo in such a film, Coogan Sr. said, "'Why, of course you can have the little punk.'" Allsop argues that this reference to punk suggests the "deodorized man-boy relationship" of Platonic tenderness behind which intergenerational hobo homosexual activity resides. Such readings like Flynt's, however, do prevail in songs that refer to the jocker tempting the boy with promises of "candy" on the road. The nonsense song *The Big Rock Candy Mountains*, for instance, is actually considered by Allsop a "homosexual tramp serenade or at least a parody of what are known as the 'ghost stories' the accomplished seducer spins to entice a child away" (212-225). (See also Chauncey's *Gay New York* for intergenerational homosexual relationships.)

According to Foucault, rather than understand sex as a "stubborn drive," one should perceive it in terms of "instrumentality" (103). He locates "four strategic unities" in place since the eighteenth century that act as "mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex" (103). One of these strategies of "relative autonomy" is the "*pedagogization of children's sex*" (104). Foucault argues that children "were defined as 'preliminary' sexual beings," and because they were "prone to indulge in sexual activity," medical, familial, and educational institutions took "charge" to manage "this precious and perilous, dangerous and endangered sexual potential" (104). The child's sexuality, according to Foucault, is dichotomized in discourse as both natural (as most children indulge in sexual activity) and unnatural (as such sexual activity was deemed in need of management). Flynt's correspondence with Ellis signifies this dualism inherent in the management of children's sexuality. A more critical consideration of Flynt's rhetoric, for instance, suggests a space of both child and adult homosexual desire and pleasure. Flynt describes to his audience "one of the worst scenes that can be imagined," consisting of eight hobos who "tripped up and seduced" a "colored boy" in a slowly moving freight train outside Cumberland, Pennsylvania. The author describes the anal receiver as having "made almost no resistance, and joked and laughed about the business" (361). This lack of resistance to anal intercourse performed by the *colored boy* may well represent a production of African-American male sexual hyperpotency or perhaps the feminization of the raced male body (discussed later in this chapter), but Flynt further asserts:

> And this, indeed, I find to be the general feeling among boys. . . . Some of them have told me that they get as much pleasure out of the affair as the jocker does. I have known them to willfully tempt their jockers to intercourse. What the pleasure consists in I cannot say. The youngsters themselves describe it as a delightful tickling sensation in the parts involved. . . . Those who have passed the age of puberty seem to be satisfied in pretty much the same way that the men are. Among the men the practice is decidedly one of passion. (361-362)

Flynt, in homophobic fashion, goes on to claim that, while there are roughly fifty or sixty thousand hobos in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, only five or six thousand are into "unnatural or perverted sexual practices" and that these men practice same-sex relations only because there is "one woman for every one hundred men on the road" (360-361). References both to force and to a lack of women as the primary causes of hobo homosexual activity are standard. Anderson, however, suggests that while isolation and force may very well contribute to hobo homosexual practices, often "these accounts serve as a defense reaction on [the writer's] part" (146-47).[19]

George Chauncey argues that male and female bodies were to some extent interchangeable in the hobohemias of New York City. Chauncey's *Gay New York* further maps a particular class effect of the American history of sexuality by

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[19] Considering that Flynt produces himself as the only "unwilling witness" (361) in this moving boxcar, as well as his overt claim that he *cannot say* what the pleasure in anal intercourse is (strongly suggesting he has never practiced such), it is probable that Flynt resorts to such narrative defensive mechanisms outlined by Anderson.

locating "the fairy" as instrumental in figuring working-class homosexual practice in New York locales inhabited by "unmarried sailors, common laborers, hoboes,[20] and other transient workers, who were a ubiquitous presence in early-twentieth century American cities" (65).[21] According to Chauncey, "the most striking difference" between the dominant sexual culture of the early-twentieth century and that of the post-war period, particularly with reference to these male working-class urban aggregates, consisted of the ability of working-class men to practice queer sex without internalizing the label of abnormality (65). He writes:

> Many men alternated between male and female sexual partners without believing that interest in one precluded interest in the other, or that their occasional recourse to male sexual partners, in particular, indicated an abnormal "homosexual," or even 'bisexual' disposition, for they neither understood nor organized their sexual practices along a hetero-homosexual axis. (65)

Chauncey argues, however, that in these "bachelor subcultures," while the hetero-homosexual binary did not determine sexual relations, "gender behavior" did (76, 66). A man's sexual relationship with an anatomical-male fairy, for instance, maintained a symbolic "male-female relationship" (65) and was understood as such by each sexual partner, as well as his/her peers. The fairy, often marked by an "effeminate" performance, figured into the male-female sexual relationship with other men despite anatomy, but not necessarily because

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[20] Chauncey cites John Mariano, who says of the young men inhabiting the Italian Lower East Side in 1920, "'When they desire to be facetious, . . . they call themselves *the Sons of Rest*'" (76).
[21] D'Emilio refers to the hobo as one of several "gay lives" represented in homosexual aggregates of the late-nineteenth century as well ("Capitalism and Gay Identity" 266).

of the fairy's social performance of effeminacy (66). Rather, according to Chauncey, the fairy, admittedly gay, did not *threaten the masculinity* of his/her sexual partner because the fairy's *sexual performance* was considered feminine, or, in other words, the fairy took only the deemed *passive position* during sexual acts of penetration. Chauncey states of the predominantly transient men in these sexual liaisons who did not consider themselves gay, "So long as they maintained a masculine demeanor and played (or claimed to play) only the 'masculine,' or insertive, role in the sexual encounter" (66), these men went "without risking stigmatization and the undermining of their status as 'normal'" (66). Likewise, fairies tended to "confirm rather than question . . . manliness" (80). Chauncey further asserts that sexual relationships with fairies were accepted because they symbolized, regardless of anatomy, "the male quest for pleasure and power" (67). In fact, like women, fairies were sometimes considered "fair game for sexual exploitation" (81). Additionally, he claims that these same-sex practices transpired between men via male prostitution, which became "increasingly popular" by the 1910s and 1920s in urban American locales (67). Chauncey's mapping of the fairy, then, represents the nonproductive expenditure of homosexual practice, both paid and unpaid—the mismanagement of sexuality that lacks masculinity as outlined in medical discourse.

Chauncey's mapping of the fairy also echoes Carpenter's discursive image of the excessive male invert. Both species are marked by an overt effeminacy located particularly in the assumed feminine and, therefore, passive position of sexual intercourse. While Carpenter establishes the male invert's *need to be loved*

as excessive, however, sexual subjects within male working-class aggregates deemed the sexually passive position of the fairy as gendered feminine and, therefore, non-disruptive to the male-female sexual relationship or to their subcultural constructions of masculinity. Chauncey argues that the transient working-class population of bachelor aggregates did not organize their sexuality via the hetero-homosexual axis, but rather through gender performance; however, when read through the feminist lens of Monique Wittig, Chauncey's statement becomes increasingly problematic.

In her classic text "The Straight Mind,"[22] Wittig contends that the "masked" "function" of "straight society is based on the necessity of the different/other at every level" (210). Locating a lack of language available to express same-sex desire within psychoanalytic theories of sexuality, Wittig argues that gays and lesbians employ, unwittingly, the only language available to them, that of the "heterosexual contract" (212) and, in doing so, "are instrumental in maintaining heterosexuality" as a practice that values male dominance and colonizes through differentiation every subject other than the white male (210). Furthermore, "it is incorrect to say that lesbians associate, make love, live with women," states Wittig, "for 'woman' has meaning only in heterosexual systems of thought and heterosexual economic systems" (212). In essence, Wittig locates the female as consistently mapped in heterosexual discourse as "the different/other" and, therefore, "the dominated" (210). Both the fairy and the excessive male invert, then, particularly if understood through Judith Butler's

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[22] Donald Morton notes that "The Straight Mind" was first read at the 1978 meeting of the Modern Language Association in New York. Wittig dedicated the piece to American lesbians.

concept of gender as performative,[23] occupy the position of the woman in the *heterosexual contract* mapped by Wittig. Therefore, while Chauncey states that these transient bachelor urban aggregates did not organize their sexuality along the hetero-homosexual axis, they did, indeed, reinscribe the *heterosexual contract* of which Wittig speaks. Unlike medical discourse that assigned only employed hobos the masculinity inherent in the heterosexual contract, hobo aggregates, consisting of bodies both employed and unemployed, rendered masculine the perceived dominant role in sexual practice.

Most intriguing about the collision of sex and work practices of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century hobo is that they are, for the most part, interdependent and, as well, valued depending on their degree of masculinity. With respect to medical discourses of sexuality, the hobo is either ideal or degenerate; the national need for unskilled labor produces him as either the rugged individual or the contagious criminal and lazy denizen. And literature emphasizes his homosocial brotherhood when developing him as both victim and hero. This underscoring of masculinity and the exclusion of the hobo's queer sexuality attested to by historical research suggests to me a rather predictable and publishable, hence contrived, focus on national homosociality.[24]

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[23] Butler notes gender as performative in several articles, but particularly in *Gender Trouble*. I understand Butler as employing the terms performance and performative distinctly. While she uses drag in her mapping of gender as performance, she also refers to the performative in "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" as performance that has been repeated so often that it has naturalized.

[24] In essence, Foucault's "talking sex" (77) speaks, but apparently only within the proper genres, those of sociological and medical discourses.

**Racial Economics**

While discursive hobo production has led me in the direction of exposing the national fear of a monstrous, nonproductive expenditure in the hobo's practices of work and sex, it has not problematized the assumed white and male construction of the hobo in the American imagination. In fact, I would argue that even in the twenty-first century, the signifier *hobo* still results in a signified white male and assumed heterosexual or asexual figure, regardless of its potential play in the form of the monstrous parasite or even clown. In producing the hobo-sexual at the intersection of discourses of nonproductive labor and desire, one of my objectives consists of troubling this fixed image of the hobo in the American imaginary. Still, I refrain from the hasty generalization that all hobos are hobo-sexuals, for to do so would be, first, inaccurate, but, more crucially, would more than likely lead to practices of *classed resistant-desiring* being pigeon-holed and fixed under the more traditional heading of the hobo as a species, which in and of itself is an historical construction of the white male transient laborer. My primary objective in mapping the hobo-sexual as a queer site in American discourse consists of exposing the exclusions inherent in the various productions of a valued and proper hobo masculinity in both labor and sex discourse. Not unlike the fairy and the symbolically castrated tramp/hobo who refuses *the pursuit of profit*, for instance, the hobo-sexual practices of raced and gendered bodies collide at the crossroads of the management of labor and sexual desire.

In her outlining the "different/other" that sustains the heterosexual contract, Wittig notes the veiling of race and class in constructions of a dominant

bourgeois heterosexual masculinity. Of the discursive production of sexuality that inherently values male dominance in the second half of the twentieth century she writes, "Men are not different, whites are not different, nor are the masters. But the blacks, as well as the slaves, are" (210). Wittig argues that discourses of "ontological difference" actually mask the "slavery" or exploitation of all subjects Other than that of the colonizing bourgeois white male; in constructing theories of sexual desires and instincts, the male-dominated realm of psychoanalysis (specifically the work of Freud and Lacan) actually produced the heterosexual contract as a "system of signs" located in the "Structural Unconscious . . . which looks too consciously after the interests of the masters" (211). Wittig's argument of the Other as inherently located in the heterosexual contract speaks, as well, although in hindsight, to the productions of raced, gendered and classed bodies subjugated in popular sexological research in the late-nineteenth and earlier-twentieth centuries. While Freud produced the mechanism of the unconscious as that where the Id resides, earlier sexologists, as previously mentioned, individualized the instinct as that which determined sexual behavior and object choice. Also, not unlike Freud's theory of *proper* psychosexual development that depends upon the resolution of the Oedipal Complex, sexologists typologized various sexual identities that did not comply with the heterosexual contract outlined by Wittig. Labelled degenerate and regressive, located on the evolutionary grid of social Darwinism as arrested development, these discursive sexualities reinscribed white bourgeois masculinity while, concurrently, perpetuating a national discourse of social eugenics as Foucault has noted.

With reference to Mumford's mapping of the nineteenth-century crisis in masculinity, for instance, I have already mentioned the classed effects and inconsistencies of the discourse of sexual neurasthenia with regard to the hobo/tramp. Advertisements that promised *proper* bourgeois sexuality in an oral agent represent a series of technologies that not only speak to the prioritizing of white, bourgeois male procreative sexual practice but, in the same process, do so at the expense of the African-American male subject. White middle-class men were produced as the only subjects able to *manage* sexual bodily excess because of an alleged inborn ability to exercise reason and will. The African-American male body, on the other hand, represented the monstrous sexual Other in its "hyperpotency" of "primitive sexual excess," an excessive desire understood as always-already unmanageable in that the African-American male, the Other, had no innate ability to reason (Mumford 86). In 1893, for instance, G. Frank Lydston and Hunter McGuire published *Sexual Crimes: Among the Negroes, Scientifically Considered*, in which the authors deemed the African-American male a reversionary type unable to control "'primitive instincts'"—a "'reversion manifest in the direction of sexual proclivities'" (qtd. in Mumford 86). This reversion or primitive sexual essence of the African-American male worked well with Lydston's argument that more black men committed rape than did white men because the "Negro race" consisted of those inferior in not only intellect, but in self-control as well (qtd. in Mumford 88).

According to Martha Hodes, white anxiety with regard to black male sexuality "reached an unprecedental level of intensity" during Reconstruction

following the Civil War (60). Segregation between black and white races became paramount after the emancipation of slaves, particularly for Southern whites "determined to retain supremacy" (60). The professed scientific discourse of such writers as Lydston and McGuire, therefore, actually speaks to a discursive production of the black male manufactured after the Civil War. For many whites, particularly in the southern states, the African-American male citizen had the potential to obliterate the "racial caste system" that guaranteed white superiority (60). The discursive production of the black male as rapist represents only one of several disciplinary mechanisms employed during Reconstruction; in order to prevent the African-American male from voting, for instance, southern whites wore their Confederate uniforms while supervising the polls, and the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan maintained racial dominance through violence, preventing black male franchisement. Hodes asserts that, because of the threat of miscegenation, political and sexual discourse focused on "sex between white women and black men with a new urgency" (60).

A prime example of such a combination of racial and political discourse is the production of the black man (led by his *primitive instinct* in *hyperpotent* mode) as rapist.[25] According to Hodes, the mythology of the black man as rapist and the prevalent fear of miscegenation combined to justify racial violence in the form of assault, lynching and whipping. Robyn Wiegman agrees that such

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[25] By the 1890s black activists, such as Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass, noted the connection between the production of such a mythology and the rise of potential black political power. Douglass actually asserts, "It is only since the Negro has become a citizen and a voter that this charge [black male rapist of white women] has been made" (qt. Hodes 73). Hodes, while agreeing that after the Civil War these charges were far more multiple, adds that "convictions for rape" did exist before, as well as during, the Civil War (73).

discourses speak to a shift in American race relations that followed the African-American male's discursive alteration from slave to citizen following the Civil War. Medical and popular constructions of the African-American male as emphatically corporeal, argues Wiegman, represent only one cog in the technological series of mechanisms produced to discipline the black subject. Citing the rise in "Ku Klux Klan and mob violence" during Reconstruction as representative of a perceived threat to "white supremacy" (229), she argues that black male enfranchisement was ideologically constructed as incommensurable with white superiority and domination and, therefore, led to the black subject being disciplined through the violent and visual mechanism of lynching.[26] With the decommodification of the black body—the perceived shift from the black body of free labor in slavery to that of citizen—came also the "increasing utilization of castration" combined with lynching, signifying an "imposition of feminization" intended to interrupt "the privilege of the [black male] phallus" (224). According to Wiegman, because the African-American male's right to citizenship relied on "his status as man" (227), the act of castration publicly signified the lack of the penis, which, in turn, resulted in the termination of the exchange from penis to phallus accorded to white men. In other words, this castration fragmented and feminized the black male body and, in turn, assigned such a body to the same social station as "those still unenfranchised" (224).

Earlier in this chapter I argue that nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century cultural and medical discourse produced the (white male) hobo/tramp as

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[26] Wiegman, while footnoting the impossibility in citing exact statistics of lynchings (as many went without reporting), does note, from 1865 – 1895, the number of lynchings in the United States as 10,000 (229).

feminized; London's reference to the hobo/tramp as eunuch, along with medical authorities reducing his reproductive capacities to that of contagion, result in the hobo/tramp being *symbolically* castrated. This same hobo/tramp, however, may reverse his castrated status through employment and normative heterosexuality. Employed, he may earn the cultural capital associated with the forms of masculinity engendered by discourses that privilege the heterosexual contract and a capitalist work ethic, but is still refused the capital resources maintained by the bourgeois male. In other words, the hobo/tramp is always denied the phallus, regardless of the myth of rags to riches. The African-American male, however, produced national anxiety in his mere potential *pursuit of profit* and was *literally* castrated for such. While the white male hobo is feminized for *his lack* of the pursuit of profit, the black man is *made to lack* for his potential pursuit of the same.

Both Hodes and Wiegman situate the origin of the myth of the black male rapist, as well as the repeated practices of lynching and castrating the black male body, at the end of the Civil War and at the beginning of black male enfranchisement. The emphasis on the African-American male body in slavery certainly eclipsed any notion of subjectivity; displayed routinely at slave trade stations stood the black body to be judged for its youth, strength, history of docility and, in turn, market value. With citizenship, however, came the African-American male's ability to vote and his potential engagement with capitalist enterprise; both practices, by way of potential homogeneity, threatened a regime of racial difference that stabilized white male supremacy. Regardless of

emancipation, however, political practice extended to sexual discourse in the form of material violence to contain the African-American once again. In locating the black male at the position of arrested development—in both sexuality and intellect—political and sexual discourse combined to eclipse his post-emancipated subjectivity by maintaining his identity at the level of the body only. Granted, the body—deemed either productive or non-productive—determined the identity of the white male hobo/tramp as well, but the socio-medico discourses designed for the white hobo/tramp demanded a degree of masculine sameness at the expense of women within an industrial-capitalist heterosexual contract. According to Wiegman, however, yet another factor that threatened white males during Reconstruction was, in fact, the black male's homogeneity within this same heterosexual scheme. Mechanisms of Reconstruction, such as the Freedman's Bureau, actually organized the black family parallel to that of the white family structure, meaning that African-American males were "entail[ed] a 'natural' judicial and social superiority over African American women" (235). Wiegman further asserts that whites "were decidedly threatened" by this "definitional sameness accorded to former slaves" (236). Discourse produced at the intersection of labor and sexuality regarding the African-American male and white male hobo/tramp, then, exposes an ironic reversal of logic dependent upon race.

While African-American paid labor and heteronormativity produced popular discourse that threatened the nation to mob violence, with regard to hobo aggregates of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the presence of

African-American male hobos in discourse consists, predominantly, of only brief references, such as Flynt's to the *colored boy* in the moving boxcar.[27] Anderson,

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[27] Unfortunately, the mentioning of African-American hobos before the 1930s (with which this project is concerned) is rare. Research with regard to the Depression, however, supports the argument that the African-American male body, particularly in its transient employment during a time of economic upheaval, was not only discriminated against, but was still contained by the rapist myth employed in the nineteenth century. In 1935, for instance, Herman Schubert conducted a survey of twenty thousand transients in Buffalo New York. Of these transients between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, six hundred and sixty two were African-American. Fewer blacks took to the rails as "roving boy[s]" because such a practice was "doubly perilous" for African-Americans specifically because of "the color of their skin" ("Added Obstacles" 1). Clarence Lee, only sixteen when taking to the road in 1929, recalls how the treatment afforded to white hobos differed from that of African American hobos. "'White kids, they fared better,'" states Lee. "'They might let them stay in a house with them, but me, I could sleep in the barn with the mules and the hay'" (qtd. in "Added Obstacles" 1). Ralph Ellison, likewise, rode the rails from Oklahoma City to Alabama. In "I Did Not Know Their Names," he recounts his confrontations with bigoted hobos whose racism took the form of a more passive aggression. He writes, "'I had learned not to attack those who were not personally aggressive and who only expressed passively what they had been taught'" (qt. in "Added Obstacles" 2). Of course, one of the discourses taught consisted of the myth of the black male's *primitive instinct* that led to his unmanageable impulse to rape white women. Lee, for instance, recalls a white hobo entering a boxcar during a stop between Baton Rouge and Denham Springs, Louisiana. The white hobo insisted that Lee be ejected from the boxcar because he "fit the description" of a wanted black rapist and would, therefore, jeopardize all hobos in the car as accomplices ("Added Obstacles" 2).

The Scottsboro Trials, of course, consist of one of the most popular productions of the *black male hobo as rapist* in American history. On March 25th, in 1931, a Southern Railroad freight train was stopped and searched in Paint Rock, Arkansas, after an alleged fight between white and black youths ensued. The nine black youths—Clarence Norris, Charlie Weems, Haywood Patterson, Olen Montgomery, Ozie Powell, Willie Roberson, Eugene Williams, and Andy and Roy Wright—were arrested for assault. The African-American hobos admitted to assaulting the white hobos on the freight car, but only after the whites attempted to throw the black occupants from the train. With the emergence of two women from the boxcar, however, rape was added to the original assault charges. Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, the alleged rape victims, were later examined by Drs. R. R. Bridges and Marvin Lynch. The African-American hobos were incarcerated in Scottsboro, Alabama, within Jackson County. With the aid of the popular press, specifically NBC news and the *Jackson County Sentinel*, the news of nine black youths suspected of raping the two white women had circulated widely. On that same night of March 25th, a "lynch mob" had gathered outside the Scottsboro jail house and required Governor Benjamin Meeks Miller to call in the National Guard to protect both the jail house and its prisoners who awaited indictment ("Scottsboro"). By April 9th, eight of the nine African-American youths were "tried, convicted and sentenced to death" ("Scottsboro"). Only one case, that of Roy Wright, thirteen years of age, ended in a hung jury; eleven jurors voted for the death penalty, while one voted for life in prison. The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and the ILD (International Labor Defense) worked on the appeal process for the remaining accused, preventing the executions scheduled for June 22nd. While the Alabama Supreme Court upheld the former convictions, the cases were then heard before the United States Supreme Court and, based on the 14th Amendment, were judged unconstitutional and remanded to the lower court. In 1933 Haywood Patterson's second trial commenced in Decatur, Alabama. At this trial, despite Ruby Bates testifying that no rape actually took place, that she and Victoria Price had been together the entire train ride, that they had both had sex with their boyfriends the night before the arrests (explaining the non-motile semen found in the women), Patterson was found guilty and sentenced to death by the electric chair. Judge James Horton suspended the death penalty, however, with a motion for a new trial. The trials of the other defendants were postponed

as well, only sparingly refers to race, inclusive of nationality, as a factor in employment in 1923. "In certain situations," he writes, "racial or national traits cause discrimination in employment" (81). Some sources do differentiate between the American public and the hobo aggregate, however. One source, for instance, argues that "tensions between race and class were minimized in Hobo jungles" precisely because hobo aggregates "were removed from structures of society" where men were judged by race alone ("Hobo Jungles").

Priscilla Ferguson Clement, however, records the movement of *black transients* in and out of the city of Philadelphia as early as 1823. Using registers from the state almshouse and prison, Clement states that, in Philadelphia, from "1823 to 1826 black vagrants[28] amounted to between 43 and 53 percent of those in Prison, and between 1822 and 1840 they were 31 percent of the wandering poor in the Almshouse" (69). She adds that "black Philadelphians accounted for just 8 percent of the city's population" in these same years (69). Clement also notes a decline in the black population of vagrants in the 1840s—a direct result of Philadelphia altering its constitution to disenfranchise black voters after several

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because local racial tensions overwhelmed any thought of a fair trial. After further trials and varying combinations of defense teams, by 1937, Patterson received 75 years in prison; Norris, after his third trial, received the death penalty (later changed to life in prison); A. Wright received a sentence of 99 years; Weems received a 75 year sentence; Powell (after slitting the throat of Deputy Blalock during a court-prison transfer; the wound was not fatal) pled guilty to assaulting an officer and received 20 years (the rape charges were dropped); and the charges of rape against Montgomery, Roberson, Williams, and R. Wright were dropped. Because the Scottsboro Trials consisted of such a drawn-out version of justice by whites, mob violence followed the initial arrests in Alabama. Beginning in July of 1931, for instance, "armed white men terrorized black neighborhoods" by firing shots into houses, wounding many, killing several black occupants. In 1933, three black men were accused of raping a white woman, and when the ILD attorneys arrived to defend the three men, the National Guard was called in to protect the lawyers. Rather than another lengthy trial, however, local deputies placed the three men accused of rape in front of a firing squad. In September of 1933, "a mentally retarded white woman accused an elderly black syphilitic cripple of raping her." While police dismissed the allegations, the African-American man was shot in his home by vigilantes ("Scottsboro").

[28] In these statistics, Clement refers to African-American male and female transients.

"antiblack riots" ensued between 1829 and 1839 (70). After the Civil War, particularly in the 1880s through the 1890s, Clement notes that, in particular, the number of black males in the House of Correction rose considerably, citing southern racism and migrations north as the primary cause for the increase in number. By the 1890s "the proportion of black tramps in the House of Correction grew to approximately twice the proportion of blacks in the entire city of Philadelphia" (70).

While all transients, regardless of race, typically spent much time incarcerated, Clement's research on *black transients*, I would argue, specifically refers to the legal and disciplinary mechanisms of the Jim Crow technology that affected African Americans particularly in the late- nineteenth century. The case of Plessy v. Ferguson, heard and determined by the Supreme Court in 1896, resulted in further justification for states to legally separate blacks and whites in public accommodations. But while states employed the *separate but equal* rhetoric resulting from the decision to justify separate drinking fountains, the Plessy decision never resulted in equal standards in accommodations, but the decision did maintain the binary logic between white superiority and black inferiority. In "Regional Dimensions of Tramping, North and South, 1880 – 1910," Eric H. Monkkonen notes that the black transient population remained, predominantly, in the southern states in the late-nineteenth century, citing statistics that claim in northern states the black transient population registered at 6.3% while in the southern states at 28.4%.[29] Monkkonen argues that the

[29] Monkkonen's statistics cite Washington, D.C., lodgers data as source. I am unable to find exact date, however (203).

"underrepresented" black transient population overall "indicates that the difficulty of black survival in a white-dominated world even extended to the lot of tramps" (204). The hobo/tramp relied on temporary employment, railroad passage and begging for survival, and this same "geographical mobility," as well as these "marginal occupational opportunities," predictably, "largely excluded blacks" (Monkkonen 204).[30]

In his study of racial violence in the west during the early-twentieth century, Michael J. Pfeifer cites several racially-motivated lynchings. Pfeifer insists that a combination of Jim Crow technologies in popular discourse managed the continuation of western racial violence by producing the western landscape as one without a structured institution of law and, therefore, a justified vigilantism. Pfeifer specifically refers to the "mob killings" of three African-American males in Wyoming, each accused of raping a white woman, as confirmation that the myth of the black male as rapist had endured into the twentieth century. Pfeifer asserts that working-class white men "performed most of the early twentieth-century racial violence," but adds that such violence was supported by national

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[30] Both Clement and Monkkonen locate the majority of black transients in the 1890s in houses of correction or local jails. According to David M. Oshinsky, African-American males were incarcerated more often and for longer periods of time than were white men in the nineteenth century. Following Reconstruction, former slaves were often incarcerated under Black Codes that entailed specific crimes only African-Americans could commit, including "'mischief,'" "'insulting gestures,'" as well as "keeping firearms" and "cohabitating with whites" (qt. in Oshinsky 21). Oshinsky also notes that, for the charge of stealing chickens, white criminals would be given "ninety days in the county jail," but African-Americans would receive "a few years in prison" (58). Incarcerated African-Americans were used in convict-leasing programs that, particularly in the southern states, worked to maintain the slave-labor system allegedly abolished at the end of the Civil War. By 1890, Oshinsky notes that the Alabama convict-leasing program "had become a huge operation, supplying bodies like the slave trade of old." He also notes the segregation within the practice of convict leasing—"Black males, age twelve and older, went directly to the mines; black women, black children, and 'cripples' were leased to lumber companies and farms. White men usually remained in the penitentiary or in local jails. White women and children (a miniscule number) were kept in special facilities" (79).

legislation that rendered miscegenation a crime.[31] Miscegenation produced as a crime, however, not only spoke to heterosexual liaisons between white women and black men as criminal, but extended to any social interactions between whites and blacks during which African-Americans transgressed their prescribed behavioural borders, resulting in a justification for vigilante violence.

The cliché *separate but equal* acted as a legislative mechanism that ensured not only further rigid discrimination which denied African Americans access to equal education, employment and medicine, but justified racial violence as a means to prevent what I would label *social miscegenation*. Pfeifer notes, for instance, that Joel Woodson—a janitor for the Union Pacific Railroad social club—was lynched after he allegedly transgressed "the deference required of African American men in their encounters with white women" in 1918 when he referred to a white female waitress as a liar.[32] Lynching, as has been mentioned, was designed as a technology for disciplining the black male body. In the case of Woodson, however, the black male body need not rape, nor allegedly rape, a white female; the act of insubordination in the social realm carried the same consequences. Regardless of the signing of the *Emancipation Proclamation* and the administering of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments during Reconstruction,

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[31] Pfeifer specifically mentions Wyoming's anti-miscegenation law passed in 1913 (4).

[32] Joel Woodson allegedly called a white female waitress a "liar" after he had ordered a meal and she responded that the restaurant was out of the item Woodson had ordered. The waitress, upon being called a liar, threw "several salt shakers" at Woodson. Edward Miller, a white customer, then physically removed Woodson from the restaurant. Woodson returned, however, with a gun and "shot Miller dead." A police officer from the Union Pacific arrested Woodson and incarcerated him in the local jail. However, a mob of "several hundred whites" collected and, within hours of Woodson's arrest, had stormed the jail, removed Woodson from incarceration and dragged his body to the railroad depot where they then hanged Woodson from a light pole. Woodson, regardless of his shooting a white man, interestingly, was hanged for his insubordination with reference to the white female waitress, not a sexual liaison with her (Pfiefer).

the lynched black male body produced a visual signifier of economic proportions in the disciplining of the African-American citizen and, in turn, the maintaining of white male supremacy. Woodson's lynched body, for instance, hanged at the local railroad depot, where the mob "publicly display[ed] his corpse for four hours" (Pfiefer).

Working-class mob violence did not always take the form of lynching, nor did it only act as a deterrent for social and/or sexual relations between African-American males and white females, but it did consistently work to separate the races. Pfeifer cites a mob killing in March of 1904, for instance, as an example of how white working-class men in transient labor camps responded to the mere allegations of "sexual and gender etiquette, especially those tinged with racial and ethnic overtones," despite the presence of legal authorities. According to Pfeifer's research, in the town of Mojave, California, James Cummings, "an African American hobo," was arrested and incarcerated for his alleged "sexual offense on a hobo boy." While later the allegations were found to be "groundless," a group of miners and workers for the railroad broke into the local jail and murdered Cummings before he could be cleared of the offense. Pfeifer's resources suggest, as well, that Cummings' body was "tarred and feathered" during the process.

While the case of Cummings takes place in the developing western U.S. and not in an urban industrial center, I would argue that the murder still speaks to the way in which racial discourse permeated hobo aggregates. As Chauncey notes, urban bachelor subcultures of the early-twentieth century did not organize

sexuality in the binary schematic of hetero-homosexual, but by gender performance. And Anderson argues that neither force nor the lack of women on the road can account for the homosexual practices of the hobo. So, too, both cultural historians, as well as Flynt in the nineteenth century, speak to the intergenerational homosexual relationships between jockers and prushuns (or wolves and lambs) as predominantly tolerated if not completely accepted in hobo subculture. In the case of Cummings, therefore, I would argue that race consists of the determining factor that results in the mob violence reflected on Cummings' body. Not only is his body left marked—*tarred and feathered*—but the sexual offense for which Cummings had been arrested is one between an *African American hobo* and a *hobo boy*; the absence of the racial signifier in the case of the boy indicates the alleged sexual relation was interracial. Both Hodes and Wiegman argue that discourses of white male supremacy consistently resorted to hiding behind the rhetoric of protection of white women as justification for racial violence and legislation; the case of Cummings represents only one example of this practice. In the alleged intergenerational homosexual relations between Cummings and the (white) boy, the reproduction of the white race is not threatened; however, the separation of the races is.

Kenneth C. Davis further notes that, fearing the American Populist movement that attempted to organize both the black and white poor, "white regimes," particularly in the southern states, tempered such a unification with discourses that emphasized the "fear of black economic power" (216). The separation of the races consisted of multiple discursive technologies that

inundated the nation and, in turn, shaped its social definition of citizen, as well as the legal designation of the same. Whether in the forms of exaggerated employment and/or sexuality, the rhetoric of *separate but equal* manifested only in practices of separation, however. And in his separation from (white male) citizenship, the African-American male was isolated and, therefore, easily placed under surveillance and overtly disciplined. Unlike the discursive series of binarized sexuality that, according to Chauncey, did not organize transient bachelor subcultures, productions of racial superiority and inferiority did. The ontological difference of which Wittig speaks, after all, does surface in (white) hobo/tramp argot. While *hobo* may refer to one who travels and works intermittently, "shine or dingy" refers to a "colored vagabond" (Anderson 101), while "dinge" refers to a "Negro tramp" (DeLorenzo 33). Neither of the catalogues consulted, however, lists the black, colored, Negro or African-American *hobo*,[33] strongly suggesting that the African-American male transient was fixed (and remains so) at the economic designation of tramp and, therefore, was denied the appellation of hobo by (white male) hobos themselves.[34]

At the crossroads of the history of sexuality and the history of the American hobo, then, race matters. Despite the fact that black males "laid most of the 3,500 miles of new track" in North Carolina in the 1870s and 1880s (Oshinsky 58), the African-American subject is far from a predominant figure in

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[33] Pfiefer employs the term *African American hobo* as noted earlier, but does so from a scholastic and contemporary site.

[34] The absence of the African-American hobo in several consulted lists of hobo argot, however, does not necessitate that the term black, Negro or colored hobo was not employed in hobo aggregates or in writings not considered by the compilers of such lists. The absence in such lists, though, does strongly suggest that reference to the African-American as hobo, if at all, was a rare occurrence.

American hobo history. Much of African-American labor, including that of the tracks laid in North Carolina, consisted of work dictated by the disciplinary mechanisms of Jim Crow. As David M. Oshinsky notes, the practice of convict leasing "spread like wildfire" after Reconstruction, particularly in the southern states (58). More often incarcerated and for longer periods of time, the African-American subject was further exploited after slavery as the free labor needed to build railroads.[35] Political technologies used to contain the African-American male at the level of the body extended to include discursive productions of the black male as rapist in scientific studies. Medical discourse produced him as an incurable regressive species, marked by his innate hyperpotency and lack of reason.

These various discourses combined to form a series of technologies that justified violence on the black male body—violence employed by hobos in transient labor camps. The extension of these discourses and their material manifestations obviously reached hobo aggregates, yet in the various discursive productions of the American hobo in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, racism that took the form of violence within hobo aggregates is veiled by an emphasis on labor as reform or the *good man* looking for work. Sedgwick notes that misogyny and homophobia buttress male-male privileged networks, such as those of hobo aggregates; within her paradigm, the castrated black male body signifies feminization and, in turn, its denied exchange from penis to phallus accorded to white men in the phallic economy. Unlike American hobo history,

[35] Oshinsky notes that the Cumberland line "came in well under budget." Four hundred convicts were leased "at a daily rate of one dollar per man" paid to the prison. The convicts worked sixteen-hour shifts with only short breaks for meals (58).

however, hobo-sexual history considers race in its very connections, particularly because of its emphasis on labor. In locating the African-American hobo in the labor and sex technologies of Jim Crow, hobo-sexual history exposes the deodorized version of hobo histories, revealing the bodies of Others dismissed in such constructions.

**Gender, Race and Labor**

Ontological gender difference is noted in (white male) hobo argot. Listed in the glossaries used in a search for the African-American hobo are the terms "Gun Moll" signifying "a dangerous woman tramp" and "Hay Bag" for "a female stew bum." In later collections of hobo argot *Hay Bag* refers to "a woman on the road," while "Broad" designates "a girl."[36] DeLorenzo's glossary, consisting of hobo argot gathered in hindsight from the late-twentieth century, does list "Sly Hay Bag" as "a *female hobo* who crafts items for sale," as well as the terms "hobo-ette" and "bo-ette," both referring to "*female hobos*" (emphasis added). DeLorenzo also notes that he has located these latter references—hobo-ette and bo-ette—in one source only, however.[37] Regardless of Clement's research that tracks an overwhelming population of both male and female African-American transients in Philadelphia, hobo argot tends to disavow, or simply dismiss, a combination of race and gender in its symbolic designations. According to research compiled by Bertha Thompson, however, "Negro" female transients

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[36] See DeLorenzo's "hobo glossary" in *The American Hoboes* (31-41).
[37] According to Fran DeLorenzo, only "books by Del Romines" refer to the "female hobo" as "hobo-ette" and "bo-ette" (35). No other authentication exists.

represented the second largest racial classification[38] of women on the road in the first half of the twentieth century, while "Indian" consisted of the second, followed by "Mexican" and, finally, "Oriental" (292).[39]

Racial signifiers used to distinguish the African-American male transient do not surface with reference to the female transient in hobo argot, however. The need for white male hobos to differentiate themselves from African-American males by the employment of such a racial signifier is juxtaposed to the need *not* to differentiate racially between white women and women of color within hobo aggregates. After all, "sisters of the road," as Thompson refers to them, always-already signify an ontological difference from men in their gendered and sexual construction; they are, in other words, inherently located within the discursive binarized construction of woman as Other.[40] Golden asserts that female hobos have historically been denied the "mythology" of the male hobo (138). While the male version of wanderlust is "elevated into folklore and myth"—its major feature one of action and power in the form of an "erratic mobility [that] blended into the nation's manifest destiny"—the female hobo "is immediately and completely defined by her sexuality" (139). The female transient has, in other words, "no place" as a hobo "unless she can be defined as a prostitute" (138-139). Weiner likewise contends that women who chose the road and, therefore, "lived outside the family" in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century "lost their claim"

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[38] "White" represents the primary racial distinction of "female transients" (Reitman 292).
[39] In Thompson's "Analysis of Newly Registered Unattached Female Transients" is yet a sixth category—Miscellaneous. 56 female bodies are listed in this category from December through June of the same year. It is more than likely that Thompson's list is produced and published after the Great Depression. While her data is undated, Thompson's text is published in 1937.
[40] In *The Female Offender*, Cesare Lombroso and Guglielmo Ferrero write, "the primitive type of a species is more clearly represented in the female" and continue in locating the female criminal as a "monster" (20-21).

to the "respectability" inherent in domestic virtues. "For women," Weiner writes, "the term 'tramp' came to denote not a transient worker, as it did for the men, but rather a sexual outcaste" (177-178).[41]

Women within hobo aggregates of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were, in the words of Thomas Minehan, "as supreme as old-fashioned housewives in the kitchen," performing as property, maintaining the jungle sphere, dependent on the male hobo for sustenance (139-140). Historical research suggests that one girl for every twenty boys took to the road in the early twentieth century.[42] Hobo girls were used as objects of exchange in the hobo jungles, working for the male hobos much like domesticated women—washing and mending the hobo's clothes, cooking for and feeding the hobo collective—as well as making themselves sexually "available to any and all boys in the camps including adults and late arrivals" (Minehan 133-139). Once these young girls aged and were either deemed no longer desirable or chose to set out from the jungle on their own, they more than likely took to urban street walking to earn the money for their sustenance. In fact, Frank C. Laubach, in his studies of vagrancy, observes that the "female kind of vagrant" is the prostitute (71).

In a particular mapping of the American hobo, the female prostitute *could* be read generously as a woman who performs a hobo work ethic, one who

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[41] It is important to note the intersection of sexuality and class here. Women whom the myth of the black male as rapist was allegedly designed to protect were white women of the middle class who, by contrast to the black male, were endowed with a mythic sexual purity and innocence. Hodes, for example, asserts that black women and white women of the lower classes were violently attacked by KKK members if only slightly suspected of sexual relations with an African-American male. According to Hodes, Ku Klux Klan members regularly "practiced the sexual mutilation of white women who lived outside particular boundaries of sexual propriety" (67).

[42] Weiner states that female transient populations increased in the 1930s. Females represented one in every ten persons on the road during the Great Depression.

traverses the city streets in hobohemia; who intersects with the hobo in sexual practices; and who, in so doing, challenges the social, economic, and sexual construction of woman so always-already discursively fixed as asymmetrical to man in bourgeois sexual and social discourse. She *could* be read as an entrepreneur of her own body who works when she likes, the recipient of a counter-capitalist tax-free income, and the kind of woman who defies her assigned domestic place. But the history of American prostitution and the history of the American hobo that reveal such a sexual system as predominantly run *by men for men* problematize and complicate these latter readings. Golden, for example, states that the female hobo lived with and performed a sexuality that was constantly controlled in "an objectified, externalized way; when she was not fending off rape, her body was often her working capital" (136). Even Anderson, in his inclusive hobo typology, develops the prostitute not as a distinct form of hobo, but as a means to male hobo pleasure at a price. She is the "usually forlorn and bedraggled creature" who makes the hobo susceptible to robbery and to venereal infection. The "lowest women who walk the streets," these sex-workers are allowed no pleasure, but in American hobo history represent both a means and a threat to the male hobo's wanderlust (142-143).[43]

Regardless of her hobo-sexual desire, then, the female prostitute's sexual pleasure was consistently and conveniently obscured in hobo discourse by an

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[43] In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey cites Molly Haskell's reference to ""the buddy movie'" as a genre of film that "dispenses with the problem" of the female character. According to Mulvey, the female presence in film "tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action" (442). Anderson's venomous reference to the female prostitute as a threat to hobo mobility works in much the same way. The female prostitute slows down the plot, so to speak, of hobo mobility and homosocial networks and is, therefore, dismissed from hobo history.

emphasis on her sex work, ironically not unlike the hobo/tramp whose sexual mobility was eclipsed by labor-as-reform. Discursive productions of the male tramp mapped him as a contagion able to infect the nation with lethargy and crime, the only remedy that of hard labor. Discourse conflated sex and work in its assumption that the employed tramp would practice compulsory heterosexuality. The female prostitute, as well, was associated with contagion, particularly that of venereal disease; her contagious status, however, was the result of her labor. The female prostitute, like the African-American male, was deemed a regressive species incapable of altering her status. In other words, unlike the white male tramp who could redeem his masculinity through work, the prostitute never regained her feminine status with an alteration in labor; she was forever a fallen woman.

Because sex and work collapse in the female prostitute's body, medical and social discourse map her as incapable of a civilized sexual pleasure, or, more often noted, her sexual desires and pleasures are made monstrous by equating them with her sex work. Margaret Gibson refers, for example, to the nineteenth-century medical production of women as asexual, which, in turn, constructed any woman with a "clearly evident" sexuality as pathological (112). While in the later decades of the nineteenth century science did consider a lack of sexuality in women a potential problem (for men), the notion of "female aneroticism" as "natural" persisted throughout the century (112). Gibson notes particularly that in the nineteenth century "the prostitute was the degenerate demon that defined the [asexual] ideal by polar opposition" (119). Additionally, Thomas Laquer asserts

that prostitution represented a social problem in the nineteenth century that was "essentially quantitative" (232-233). Locating prostitution in the arena of "unsocialized sex" (230), Laquer argues that sex as commodity "became *the* social evil" because it represented a form of asocial and private exchange that threatened the prevailing social context (232-233). Sex with prostitutes, states Laquer, "is set in sharp contrast . . . to the household economy of sex, which is quintessentially social and productive" (232). The prostitute, however, is "regarded as an unproductive commodity" (230).

The dominant discursive technologies surrounding the female prostitute, then, produce her as the Other of proper female asexuality, as well as a form of non-productive expenditure that threatens the capitalist emphasis on stability, accumulation and profit. Above I argue that in purchasing potential sexual pleasure from prostitutes, the hobo performs an act of nonproductive expenditure in that the hobo-sexual act procured is one based in temporality, anonymity, and instability, as well as an end in itself as opposed to a means to profitable ends. With regard to the transient female prostitute, and in consideration of prostitution as a male-dominated system, there does exist a potential hobo-sexual collision of non-productive expenditure in sex and work, which unlike bourgeois medical and social discourse, requires the deconflation of sex work and sexual pleasure.

In *Sister of the Road* (1937), for instance, Thompson describes her fifteen years spent in and between American hobohemias after having been born in jail because her mother would not marry the father of her child.[44] Thompson

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[44] According to Bertha Thompson, Walker C. Smith visited her grandfather's farm where her mother resided in the early twentieth century. (Thompson's grandfather—Moses Thompson—

introduces her readers to her fond memories of a mother who cooked in the hobo jungles and her three siblings who all had "a different father" (8). Bertha learned her geography and numbers, as well as her alphabet (not unlike Frederick Douglass) by studying the writing on the freight trains that frequented her life. Once an adolescent, she rode the rails accompanied by her sister and later on her own, spending much of her time between rides pick-pocketing and begging. She then became a pimped prostitute who, in one single afternoon, tested positive for both venereal disease and pregnancy. Unfortunately, "Box-car" Bertha's autobiography does not speak to the sexual pleasures of the hobo-sexual but, instead, of her relationships predominantly based in love and infatuation. Thompson's pleasures do, however, primarily take the form of counter-capitalist hobo movements associated with the I.B.W.A. and, in turn, expand the historical female presence within American hobo subculture from the mere vessel of male hobo pleasure to the actual agent of hobo anti-capitalist practice. However, according to Thompson, female hobos also had their own wanderlust, including their own transient sex and work practices, such as prostitution, that sometimes came with the risk of disease and the added "hazard" of potential pregnancy (Reitman 285).

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died in 1906.) After having sex with Smith during the first week of his stay, Moses Thompson's daughter became pregnant with Bertha. The father urged his daughter not to marry. Confronted by local authorities—the village parson, the sheriff and three "good citizens"—five days following Bertha's birth, the grandfather still refused to make his daughter and Smith marry, resulting in "a warrant for the whole family" and, two weeks later, a sentence of six months in jail for Bertha, her mother and her biological father. Moses Thompson was fined one hundred dollars as well as costs, but refused to pay the fees and was incarcerated also. Bertha Thompson, having heard the story of her birth several times, repeats "All of them enjoyed their stay there. Grandfather wrote a series of articles which were published in the New York and London liberal papers. Father caught up on his back reading. Mother did the jail cooking and sewing, nursed me, and studied Esperanto and socialism" (12).

In one particular reference to prostitution, Thompson recalls "the lesbians on the road" who were also "bi-sexual . . . that is, who liked both men and women and also another group who were prostitutes, selling themselves to men for money but having women sweethearts" (66). This reference to female bi-sexuality and lesbians who work as prostitutes represents, at least in one latent form, the queer sexual pleasure of women most typically denounced in dominant discourses on female sexuality and erased in male hobo literature. Additionally, while prostitution is historically hinged to men, Thompson's reference to these female prostitutes as "on the road" strongly suggests a kinetics not typically associated with prostitution. Thompson's hobo history, itself, consists of an emphasis on mobility; she never *remained* a prostitute, but consistently altered her temporary employment, as well as her geographical location. Movement, as noted earlier, determines the various connections in hobo-sexual practice. The choice to counter dominant discourses of sex and labor represents a choice within a binary schematic, but the hobo-sexual practices that result from such a choice are determined by various kinetic connections as opposed to binary logic. Thompson's mapping of the mobile prostitute, then, suggests that neither the prostitute's sexual labor nor her sexual pleasure remained fixed, but that she altered her labor and her sexual connections.

In her data collected over fifteen years, Thompson also lists several forms of sexual non-productive expenditure as reasons why women take to the road. Under the heading of female transient "vices," she lists the sexual desires or the "sex irregularities" of "the nymphomaniacs, the masturbators, those who run

away to have an abortion; well-marked homosexualists, perverts" (283). What classifies these sexual practices as irregular, of course, is that they represent abnormal forms of female sexual propriety—a discourse by which Thompson is obviously affected, despite her alleged attitude passed down from her mother "to whom nothing was ever terrible, vulgar, or nasty" (7). These listed sex irregularities consist of forms of female sexual desire that are excessive; the engendered pleasures represent the mismanagement and deregulation of the heterosexual contract outlined by Wittig.

While Carol Groneman argues that the label of "hypersexual woman" produced in nineteenth-century scientific discourse was applied to nymphomaniacs, lesbians and prostitutes collectively, Gibson extends Groneman's assertion by adding that metaphors of the body— particularly that of the "hypertrophied clitoris"—discursively connected an abnormal masculinity to the female sexual Other (110).[45] Like Mumford in his analysis of the crisis of masculinity for white middle-class men, Gibson contends that nineteenth-century American medical discourse privileged "evolutionary theory" to construct forms of degeneration to explain "mental disease in general, and sexual perversion in particular" and directed its attention specifically to the "excessive stimulations" of the modern era thought to "exacerbate any weakness" in the nervous system of patients (115). With regard to social Darwinism, the distinction between the sexes was valued as a sign of evolutionary development in the species. Therefore,

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[45] In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing connects female inversion to hypersexuality and hypersexuality to "automasturbation . . . neurasthenia . . . anaphrodisia . . . *faute de mieux* (for want of something better) . . . *libido insatia* . . . and ultimately disgust with the male sex in general" (46).

medicine employed Darwinism to explain inversion as a regressive "slide down the evolutionary ladder" by equating inverts with what James G. Kiernan in 1888 claimed to be "the original bi-sexuality of the ancestors of the race" (qt. in Gibson 115). In the female invert, then, the clitoris—"the woman's penis"—consisted of the "source" of inversion; its size, in turn, became of particular interest in that an exaggerated clitoris could account for an abnormal masculinity in the female invert (125). In essence, an enlarged clitoris, "threatening to become or be used as a penis, indicated that the invert could not be considered truly female, and thus underlined her essential masculinity" (122).

Clitoral growth, then, became associated with a more aggressive sex drive and, therefore, a perverse female masculinity. Medical science tended to map masculinity onto all female bodies considered hypersexual; therefore, documenting clitoral measurements became the common practice regarding women who showed any signs of abnormal—not asexual—sexuality. Nymphomaniacs, for instance, represented the most "extreme version" of hypersexuality in the nineteenth century. The nymphomaniacal female, according to Gibson, "represented a lust that was necessarily masculine" (113). Also, masturbation, considered in the late nineteenth century as "'venereal orgasm by means of the hand, the tongue, or any kind of body by one's self or another person'" obviously linked the practice in women to female inversion (qt. in Gibson 116). Not only did both female masturbators and inverts represent a hypersexuality, but one without the need for men. In fact, some physicians actually argued that "exhaustion and uterine disease could arise from female

orgasm in the absence" of semen (117). Gibson further notes that, because hypersexuality was located in the clitoris, medical literature of the late-nineteenth century advocated for "clitoral excision . . . as a cure" for masturbation, nymphomania and inversion (117).

One of the most prominent discourses regarding masturbation was the slippery slope conclusion that the practice led to (or was a product of) insanity. Like all perversions, masturbation represented both the cause and the effect of degeneresence. Medical discourse not only associated insanity with inversion in that both practices were produced as forms of "self-abuse" in women, but, likewise, argued that both types of hypersexuality manifested in "genital abnormalities" (117). Additionally, associations between the female invert and the criminal collided at the site of the enlarged clitoris; according to Dr. Grace Peckham in 1891, "'it is the general belief that hypertrophies of this organ [the clitoris] are common among prostitutes'" (qtd. in Gibson 119). Krafft-Ebing, as well, associated female inversion with prostitution. In *Psychopathia Sexualis* he notes "possible sources from which homosexual love in woman" may arise (46). Of prostitutes and female inversion, he writes:

> Prostitutes of gross sensuality who, disgusted with the intercourse with perverse and impotent men by whom they are used for the performance of the most revolting sexual acts, seek compensation in the sympathetic embrace of persons of their own sex. These cases are of very frequent occurrence. (46)

Discourse connecting prostitution with hypertrophy "was fortified" by the common existence of syphilis in the prostitute, which was a "common factor in clitoral hypertrophy and excision" (Gibson 119).[46] Syphilis, states Gibson, gave a "corporeal representation" of the moral degradation of prostitution and, as well, enabled the practice to be deemed not only degenerative, but infectious, again linking the prostitute to the female invert as both were considered contagious hypersexual types (120).[47] Not only the prostitute, but "all lower class women," states Gibson, were connected to hypersexuality and homosexuality (120). For instance, medical discourse consisted of doctors "condemn[ing] certain forms of lower-class employment," such as that performed by servants, seamstresses, lacemakers and workers in larger stores, asserting that these occupations led to inversion, and, therefore, the "ideal situation" for women was to work inside the home only (120).[48] While Gibson refrains from making any overt connection between the contagious female invert and the working-woman's surroundings, the medical connection between female inversion and labor relies heavily on the predominantly all-female working-class environment of the nineteenth century. Gibson does, however, note that medical discourse frequently cited the operation

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[46] In *The Criminal* (1890), Ellis argues that prostitution heavily influences *the lack* of criminality in women. "For the large numbers of women who are always falling out of the social ranks," writes Ellis, prostitution is their "only method of sustenance." Ellis adds, however, that prostitutes themselves inhabit "the borderland of crime." He also notes the masculine features of female criminals; he refers specifically to Sarah Chesham (who allegedly murdered her children and husband) as a woman of "'masculine proportions'" and "a girl called Bouhours" (who was executed in Paris for stealing from and murdering her male lovers) as a woman of "remarkable muscular strength; she dressed as a man; her chief pleasure was to wrestle with men; and her favorite weapon was the hammer" (18).

[47] Gibson, in her mapping of the female invert as contagious, specifically cites the sexological production of the *true* invert, the more aggressive lesbian who allegedly coerces a woman who is more or less undecided with homosexuality. Gibson argues that produced in this discourse is the true invert as "disease-carrier" and her prey as "the infected" (120).

[48] Ellis argues that the "domestic seclusion of women" limits their lives of crime (*The Criminal* 18).

of particular machines as potentially leading to hypersexuality in working-class women. The effects of running a sewing machine, for instance, were thought to be "excessively stimulating" to the clitoris and, in turn, caused "genital abnormalities" (120).

In further connecting hypersexuality to raced and classed females, Gibson argues that, in discourse, "the black woman" represented "the zenith of all sexuality" (121). While proper white, middle-class women allegedly maintained normal clitoral dimensions, racialized women became the token carriers of the polar opposite. Dr. Robert T. Morris, for example, highlighted the "large" and, ironically, "'free'" clitorises of black women in 1892 (qtd. in Gibson 121). Gibson also notes the conflation of race, sexuality and crime produced by sexologists. Ellis, for instance, asserts in 1895 that lesbian practice is particularly common in "'negroes and mulattos,'" and he cites specific cases during which "black women raped black girls," resulting in an emphasis on not only female inversion, but aggression (masculinity/hypersexuality) and crime in the African-American female body (Gibson 121).[49] Not unlike African-American males, African-American females, as well as other nonwhite women, were connected to myths of larger sexual organs, as well as uncontrollable sexual urges, signifying a "primitive state without sexual control or repression" (121).

Most interesting to note, however, is that, according to Gibson, if white women possessed a hypertrophied clitoris and were considered true inverts, "these women could effectively be excluded from the white race," as well as from the

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[49] Also interesting to note is Ellis's association between criminal behavior and an "extreme anti-social instinct" (*The Criminal*, 19).

"evolutionary status it claimed" (122). This conflation of sex and race, according to Siobhan Somerville, represents one of the various ways in which science used discursive constructions of race in order to "articulate emerging models of homosexuality" (72). Somerville argues that medical discourse in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century was particularly "steeped" in an anxiety surrounding poly- or bi-racial bodies (72). The figure of the "mulatto"—the discursive symbol of the miscegenation of black and white bodies—became representative of a "mixed body model" borrowed by sexologists to "make sense" of the invert (72). As noted earlier, Foucault maps productions of sexuality as a technological series of mechanisms. Within such a series, the female body of the exploited class—the hypersexual woman regardless her specified sub-typologies—was designed to direct value toward the production of bourgeois female asexual performance and, in the process, was utterly fixed to the discursive and material disciplinary mechanisms of *perversion-heredity-degeneresence*.

The lack of a combination of racial and gendered signifiers in hobo argot, then, does not speak to the difference between hobo aggregates and bourgeois culture, but to the similarities inherent in the discourses of knowledge that shaped both social spaces. The apparent absence in hobo argot of the need to differentiate between female hobos—an absence noted when compared to the absolute presence of racial signifiers projected onto the African-American male tramp—signifies a series of sex tech discourses that, while emanating from a hegemonic bourgeois center, extends to the exploited classes as Foucault has noted. In the discursive productions of the American hobo as part of a bonded

brotherhood or a floating fraternity is the emphasis on homo-sociality—male-male relations in need of constant surveillance and management that, therefore, depend upon both a fear of homosexuality and an exploitation of women. While hobo aggregates may not have organized sexuality via the specifics of a hetero-homosexual binary, as Chauncey argues, these same bachelor subcultures relied heavily upon the binary logic of gender difference, which is, quite frankly, always-already inherent in the productions of sexuality.

**Hobo History Reconsidered**

The history of sexuality and the history of the American hobo, then, overlap in their exclusionary practice of Othering—sex tech discourses that forbid the African-American male the privileged phallus and disallow female sexual pleasure by locating both bodies of race and gender as primitive on the evolutionary scale. This exclusionary practice relies on the inclusion of the sexual Other, however, in a dialectic of identity formation. Only by producing the white classed female, raced female and African-American male body as representations of a transgressed rigid gender binary can the mythology of the American hobo, as well as that of the heterosexual contract, be maintained as sites of white male dominance.

Exposed at the intersection of discursive productions of sexuality and hobo subculture is a series of dominant discourse that manages any threat to white male privilege by constructing the Other as monstrous. Not unlike the popular production of the tramp as a national monster that, by opposition, allowed middle-

class Americans to construct the idyllic boundaries of citizenship, hobo subculture located the raced male and female body in a technology of monstrosity, reducing both the non-white and non-male race and gender to the *parasite within*. In the process, these discursive constructions of monstrosity justified the exploitation and violence used to discipline such bodies. In a practice regulated by the conflation of sex and gender that, in turn, is managed by strict binarized logic, the African-American male body is *feminized* through a literal castration, while the hypersexual woman—representative of Othered sex, gender, race and class—is *masculinized* by her ideological phalloplasty. Within discourses of labor, as well, both bodies are developed discursively as those that consume but do not produce legitimately. The African-American male represents not only a shift from free labor to that of paid labor that jeopardizes white male hobo mobility, but as well is produced as the ravage consumer of the white middle-class woman and, in turn, threatens to dismantle a fixed racial division by miscegenation. The hypersexual woman, while disciplined by representations of contagion, is also produced as a threat to hobo mobility. The devalued and diseased female of hyper-, yet non-productive, sexuality registers as the nonprofitable commodity in both hobo and middle-class discourse.

The hobo-sexual, unlike the productions of the American hobo, enables a connective and queer site in American history that exposes the exclusions of raced, sexed and gendered bodies as a series of technologies employed to reiterate the always-already unstable discursive production of white male privilege that, by way of a consistent repetition, is invested with a normative value. Additionally,

the hobo-sexual enables the connection of these excluded raced and gendered bodies in hobo mythology to the perverse practices of the sexual Other of sexological discourse. In locating hobo-sexual practice at the intersection of nonproductive expenditure, the hobo-sexual foregrounds the agency and mobility in transient forms of sex and work most notably erased in popular socio-medico-journalistic productions of the hobo in the late-nineteenth century. The hobo-sexual speaks to the *conscientious objecting to* outlined by London and also emphasizes the *classed consequences*, including those consequences that are a direct result of race and gender, of such a resistance within capitalist regimes. Unlike the figure of the nomad employed in poststructural theory, the hobo-sexual does not speak to a re-territorialization of a minority culture as noted by Caren Kaplan, but instead to the de-territorialization of dominant discourses within capitalism that map ontological difference as justification for exploitation. The hobo-sexual, if only temporarily, represents the *moving on, against and beyond* the homo-sociality so inherent in both national and hobo tradition—a *resistant desiring* capable of exposing the illogical and assumed stable productions of heteronormativity and a capitalist work ethic.

**The American Hobo-Sexual: A Lesbian Connection**

While I locate the hobo-sexual at the intersection of discourses of labor and sex in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that manage nonproductive expenditure, there remain a few points regarding my theorization that should be clarified. I have referred to the hobo-sexual as an apparent personage or typology of sorts; I use the term *figure*, for example, in the last chapter. My objective, however, is not to produce another identity from which to speak. Rather, the hobo-sexual represents a location of my redeployment of queer *as practice* in work and sex, and is, therefore, always temporary. There exists nothing necessarily fixed, in other words, about the hobo-sexual as an identity, nor as a permanent queer practitioner. In fact, there exists no research that suggests any permanence with respect to such a figure. No subject can maintain permanence as a conscientious objector of capitalist economies. Objectives, particularly those for sustenance, must be met by every subject on the market. And the pursuit of such objectives interrupts practices of resistant-desiring and the free-floating intensities of the molecular mapped by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The hobo-sexual, then, should be perceived as a dense transfer point of particular and temporal *practices of resistant desiring*, as opposed to a rigid taxonomy of species—a *queer site*, yet one complete with discursive, material histories inclusive of actual *classed*, *sexed* denizens/citizens and their affected and non/productive circulation.

This chapter reads specific texts inclusive of urban lesbian protagonists as hobo-sexual. My objective is two-fold. I argue that reading the lesbian in these

texts as hobo-sexual actually consists of a left popular culture praxis outlined by Laura Kipnis. Both the lesbian and the hobo are appropriated from dominant discourses that define each as ontologically different. The rearticulation of both figures as hobo-sexual, however, transforms this difference into antagonistic discourse. I also argue that reading these texts with an emphasis on sexuality alone, or as lesbian, does not necessitate a consideration of class consequences, nor race. An analysis of race is inherently located in a hobo-sexual reading, however, because of its emphasis on labor. Race, rather than understood as ontological difference, is rearticulated as antagonistic discourse when read through a hobo-sexual lens.

**The Lesbian as Hobo-Sexual**

I suggest reading a particular urban lesbian literature as a connection in hobo-sexual history and, in the process, recovering the female hobo's sexual pleasure denied in American hobo cultural productions, as well as adding a queer dimension to American history. The urban lesbian character I am most interested in carries forward the transient working-class and sexual practices of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century hobo and walks *into*, *against* and/or *around* the homophobia and misogyny that are used to regulate and enable the recurrent national and hobo homosocial networks of privileged male-male relations.

Sarah Schulman, author of *Girls, Visions and Everything*, states that the novel consists of her insistence that "the experience of [lesbian] community"

become part of the "trajectory of popular American heroism" (ix)—that "the lesbian" represent "the emblematic American, the character through whom American life is measured and evaluated" (viii). Schulman's shift from *lesbian community* to the *lesbian* speaks to my reading of London's hobo/tramp as both asocial and communal. I employ the term *aggrégate* as opposed to community, however, because, while the main stem and the jungle consisted of hobos, these locations were unstable in their composition of specific individuals, movements and practices. Community, however, speaks more to an imagined organized aggregate than to temporary associations, and the term lesbian has the potential to eclipse a variety of antagonisms under a specific sexual identity.[1] What Schulman refers to as the lesbian community, then, when read through a hobo-sexual lens, should be read as an historical connection with the American hobo home-guard of hobohemias—a *hobo-sexual* home-guard. While several lesbian characters congregate at specific locations, such as at marches and bars, these recurrent gatherings are temporal, are loosely organized, never consist specifically

[1] Kath Weston, in her essay "Get Thee To A Big City," considers the "imaginative processes" (258) that result in homosexual subjects migrating from rural to urban locations. One of the primary factors, according to Weston, is the "quest for community." Employing Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined community," Weston argues that homosexuals in rural areas "interpret" themselves through an "attachment" with a "fictional" group to the point where their subjectivity "becomes inseparable from constructions of 'we-ness.'" Due to "popular depictions" of homosexuality as "a constant 10 percent," for instance, the "imagined gay community" is "susceptible" to "spatial location," having had its geographically located image reproduced in "print and other forms of media." While this community is imagined, Weston argues that, as well, it is "more than an illusion" as it "threads its way through social structures and everyday experience" (257). The production of the gay community, then, consists of a dialectical process in which representations of community via media and the actual migrations to and inside urban locales are interdependent. However, while images of the gay community in urban locales, such as San Francisco and New York City, lead to migrations of gay/lesbian identified subjects from rural areas to these cities, "most tales from the Great Gay Migration" do not speak to discovering community in these cities, but, instead, to a process of "anti-identification" (269). Weston argues that the reason for this is that these individuals represent various races, genders, and ages and that these differences and their antagonisms are sanitized in representations of the gay community in multiple media.

of self-professed lesbians nor female-female sex only, never disrupt any character's mobility and, as well, never dominate the hobohemian cityscape of the novel.

It is my contention that the distinction of lesbian literature—specifically texts read and taught as produced *by* self-professed lesbians *about* the lesbian experience—need not be erased in order to be extended, however. Reading lesbian literature through a hobo-sexual lens need not threaten the specifically lesbian content inherent in such texts, but instead simply requires a (re)organization of perception—an *opening up*—of such an identity politic in order to produce an historical connection in hobo-sexual practice. Without promoting a complete erasure of identity politics, Rosemary Hennessy calls for a reworking of identities that releases "the identity form 'I am' to history" (230). Her theory of a coalition politics works to unite various identities, tracing connections by drawing attention to the discourses of "sensation and affect" that have historically organized desire into categories of "allowed and outlawed human needs" (217). Reading the urban lesbian character *as* hobo-sexual insists on what Hennessy deems the "process of unlearning that opens up the identities we take for granted to the historical conditions that make them possible" (229).

The texts I choose to read closely in this chapter do speak to specific lesbian experiences, including the challenges particular to female same-sex performance,[2] identity and desire that publicly hinge on a dominant discursive

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[2] In *Girls, Visions and Everything*, for instance, Lila and Emily walk down a street, holding hands, which causes Emily to vocally consider whether or not it is a safe practice and Lila to "be ready to be hurt and not surprised" (173). Lila and Emily then confront "two skinheads and their girlfriends" (175) who block the lesbians' way home. One of the skinheads holds a "wooden

history of psycho-sexology that maintains an influential existence in the late-twentieth century. These texts as well, however, collectively disrupt the notion of any single definition of lesbian as a fixed experience or identity.[3] My mapping of particular lesbian literature as hobo-sexual, in fact, exposes the fixed sign of lesbian as problematic in that *class matters* in the experiences of these lesbian characters. While lesbian speaks to a sexual identity, it does not necessitate considerations of class or *sexual practicing* in its employment as an identity sign. A hobo-sexual approach to lesbian literature does. As with Louis Althusser's mapping of ideology as a complex process resulting from the relative autonomy and interdependency of both base and superstructure, my reading of these lesbian texts/characters as hobo-sexual, while focused specifically on lesbian culture, emphasizes economic determinism in the last instance.[4] At the intersection of class and sexuality, lesbian—a generalized label produced by sex-techs and

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board, like a weapon" at his crotch and says to the two lesbians, "'Just fuck me" (174). Ray, who intervenes, diffuses the violence.

[3] Butler, in "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," claims that the identity of lesbian is more productive when employed as a provisional sign in the practice of a strategic identity politics. She focuses on the slippery signification of such a sign as understood by the subject and perceived by the addressee. I also emphasize the identity lesbian as a subject-sign but also recognize the slipperiness of such a generalized term. Collecting female same-sex desire under a single sign—lesbian—does not necessitate a consideration of difference. Age, race, economic status, etc., are not inherent in the employment of such a sign, nor is sexual practicing. In other words, employing the identity sign lesbian does not necessitate same-sexual practice. The denotation of lesbian suggests female-female sexual desire, yet lesbians not in the moment of desiring or those who have not desired in years still maintain the identity sign. Lesbians who sleep with men employ the identity sign as well. Like Sedgwick who writes of desire in *Epistemology of the Closet*, I find it reductive that sexual desire is organized, predominantly, around the anatomy of sexual object-choice. I also, however, agree with Foucault's assertion that the production of sexual identities, such as lesbian, works to maintain a map of perversion-identity-degeneresence, but these produced identities also render positions from which sexual minorities may speak. In essence, my objective here is not to employ the binarized logic of queer vs. identity, but to emphasize the queer *in* identity that, rather than separating through identity signs of ontological difference, connects varied and seemingly unrelated practices devalued in dominant discourse.

[4] In his mapping of the reproduction of the means of production and, in turn, ideology and subjectivity, Althusser outlines both the "relative autonomy" of the superstructure with regard to the economic base and the "reciprocal action" of the superstructure on the base. In the Marxist tradition, states Althusser, the "effectivity" of these relations between superstructure and base are determined "in the last instance" by the economic base (67).

employed in identity politics—is exposed as a canopy term with the potential to reduce complex antagonisms to a single ontological difference. My objective in reading these specific lesbian texts as hobo-sexual is to emphasize the queer (nonproductive and temporal) practices of characters in both sex and work and, in turn, aid in forging strategic alliances by connecting antagonistic and resistant practices traditionally divided and conquered under capitalist regimes.

I have selected Audre Lorde's *Zami* (1982), Schulman's *Girls, Visions and Everything* (1986) and Eileen Myles's *Chelsea Girls* (1997) for this chapter to produce a hobo-sexual bricolage in material queer culture. Examples of various literary genres—the novel, the autobiography[5] and an anthology of previously published short stories—these texts, despite their differences, connect through their protagonists' hobo-sexual practices, as well as in their ability to expose the American urban landscape as hobohemian. While Lorde and Myles employ a self-reflexive first-person narrative, Schulman develops the combination of an animated urban lesbian's dialogue and an omniscient narrator with access to her thoughts to move readers through a late-twentieth century New York City. Chauncey has noted the male hobo presence in New York City at the turn of the twentieth century,[6] but these lesbian texts reveal female hobo-sexual aggregates and the challenges inherent in such hobo-sexual spaces from the 1950s through

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[5] *Zami* is represented as a "biomythography" in the full title of the text—*Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (A Biomythography by Audre Lorde)—suggesting a collision of biography and myth. (See the cover of the 1982 edition.)

[6] In his introduction to *Gay New York*, Chauncey states that his text concentrates specifically on gay male culture because to focus on both gay male and lesbian subcultures—"to write a book about both that did justice to each and avoided making one history an appendage to the other"—seemed "virtually impossible." He states, as well, that, because of the omniscience of a male-dominated culture that mandated differences in "social and spatial organization," gay male and lesbian aggregates "inevitably took very different forms" (27).

the 1990s. Dominant in these texts is an urban landscape that differs significantly from the commodified images of New York City—from the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty to the bright lights of Times Square. The hobo-sexual protagonist, because of her desire to be an artist and her status as a poor pervert in these texts, occupies a different New York. She maps the lesbian bars, the back alleys, the rooftops and the blood banks.

New York City figures predominantly in these texts as a space where the underground artist can make connections with like-minded hobo-sexuals. Central to these connections and aggregates is the hobo-sexual protagonist's *conscientious objecting to* dominant discourses that manage art as a commodity. The bourgeois art galleries that have displaced former working-class and poor residents are juxtaposed to the loosely organized aggregates of the hobo-sexual artist. And vital to these aggregates is the art of story-telling—one of the communal aspects of the hobo. One of the reasons behind my selecting these specific texts for this chapter, in fact, consists of my desire to emphasize story-telling as a social adhesive of hobo-sexual aggregates. As a novel, Schulman's text obviously represents the telling of a tale. But, as well, another layer of story-telling is present, practiced by characters within the hobo-sexual aggregates mapped by her protagonist. And while Lorde and Myles are typically categorized as lesbian poets, I have selected their prose to maintain an emphasis on the telling of the tale.

Another reason behind text selection consists of my desire to map the hobo-sexual throughout the twentieth century. Lorde's text, for instance,

highlights a mid-twentieth-century New York City characterized by racial segregation; Schulman accentuates the alterations to the city during the Reagan years; and Myles's narrative, while it travels throughout New England, also represents New York City in the 1990s. While none of these texts speaks specifically to a shift from industrial to late capitalism, Schulman's novel emphasizes the geographical displacement of the working- and non-working poor by the capitalist enterprise of gentrification, while Myles flippantly maps love in commodified forms, suggesting a sarcastic play with what Laura Kipnis defines as the postmodern, or the "complete commodification of the image sphere" (19).[7] Likewise, apparent in all of these texts is a shift in hobo-sexual travel; the hobo's steam engine has been replaced by the subway, automobile and bicycle while the distance traveled, for the most part, has been reduced to the inner-city—a home-guard mobility determined by both the hobo-sexual artist's desire to inhabit such a dense urban space and the fear of leaving NYC in an economic climate of rent increases.[8]

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[7] Kipnis cites Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1977) in her argument that the shift from modern to postmodern is not one of industrial to post-industrial. Rather, late capitalism is "marked" by "the complete industrialisation of all segments of society" (19), that societal structures at any historical moment are at various stages of development and are, therefore, "asynchronous" (18) or, in other words, co-existent. Kipnis employs Debord's mapping of the spectacle as a commodified form in that "the spectacle is the capitalist colonisation and monopolization of the image," and by way of this manipulation, all image subjugates viewers to the "monopoly of appearance" produced by late capitalism as opposed to the conditions of production veiled by it. Kipnis regards representation, then, as the most "privileged ideological form" in that Althusser understands that individuals recognize themselves in a "mirror-like relationship with dominant ideology" while Debord contends that all ideology is spectacular in that the spectacle always consists of the dominant order's "uninterrupted discourse about itself" (21).

[8] In *Girls, Visions and Everything*, Schulman's protagonist Lila knows that "New York is closed; once she gave up an apartment she'd never find another one" (50).

Most hobo historians agree that after the Great Depression the hobo or tramp of *conscientious objecting to* was replaced by the rubber-tramp[9] nuclear family on the road in search of economic stability.[10] These urban lesbian twentieth-century narratives that I read as hobo-sexual, however, speak to a *conscientious objecting to* dominant discourses that manage both labor and sex. Their sex and work practices are temporary, spontaneous and dependent on their kinetics. In their desire to be artists of hobohemian landscapes, these hobo-sexual protagonists intersect with employment only for the sustenance required to maintain their health and home-guard mobility; their real work, after all, is art. Lorde discovers reading and writing poetry in her "voluntary aloneness" (83), for instance. Myles worries that grant-writing organizations have discovered she really is not a poet, and Schulman's Lila Futuransky imagines the lesbian art scene of the East Village as the "new mecca" (60). These hobo-sexuals, then, speak to the *flicker of rebellion* of London's hobo/tramp, to a home-guard mobility located primarily within New York City, and to the hobo as artist.

**A Left Popular Culture**

According to Schulman in her preface written for the reissuing of *Girls, Visions and Everything* in 1999, the novel consists of her attempt in 1984 "to situate [lesbian friendship and romance] as the essential heartbeat of a city. . . . the

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[9] Rubber Tramp refers to tramps who travel by car. (See DeLorenzo and Anderson's *On Hobos and Homelessness*, 1998.)

[10] Anderson maps a shift from the hobo who rides the rails in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to entire families, particularly in the mid-west, who drove and hitch-hiked to California looking for work during the Great Depression, to the illegal seasonal harvester and homeless of the late twentieth century. (See Anderson *On Hobos and Homelessness*, 1998).

desire to imagine, invent and document a life and an accompanying literature for people who have no context" (viii).[11] *Girls, Visions and Everything* consists of a counter-capitalist critique of the art industry—what protagonist Lila Futuransky refers to as "an invading homogenous monster"—by juxtaposing the commodified art form that "ooz[es] its slime all over Second Avenue" to Lila's introspective lesbian "East Village vantage point" (43), consisting of an aggregate of lesbian artists who produce and perform their more spontaneous and non-profitable art at "the local lesbian clubhouse" (4). However, Lila, writes Schulman, "had often considered the question of marketing lesbian popularity" and concludes that the most "successful model" for selling the outcast had been the Beats (59). "They had made a phenomenon of themselves," thinks Lila and continues to comprehend that the Beats "made themselves into the fashion . . . building an image based not so much on their work as on the idea that they led interesting lives" (60).

Lila actually imagines quite a production, especially cult-like and commodified, of the lesbian. Her mind's eye perceives "kids all over America" packing up and heading to the East Village "to hang out with the lesbians"; thick crowds of folks "hungry for stimulation," waiting to enter the Kitsch-Inn—the local lesbian clubhouse—to watch the midnight shows that promise "the last word in Lesbiana" (60). She imagines "magazine covers, syndicated situation comedies . . . the lecture circuit," as well as the Kitsch-Inn as "the new mecca" (60). According to her introspective imagination, "[i]n Amerika, anything is

[11] Terry Castle speaks of this lack of context, as well. She argues that the lesbian "is never with us, it seems, but always somewhere else: in the shadows, in the margins, hidden from history, out of sight, out of mind" (*The Apparitional Lesbian* 2).

theoretically possible," including "maybe even walk[ing] down the street without being afraid" (60). Lila ends this introspective scheme by figuring "the next time she saw Allen Ginsberg buying cannollis at Veniero's she would be sure to ask him how he did it" (60). Schulman, fifteen years later, however, reconsiders this particular scene a representation of the author's own "innocence" and "brave imagination" engendered by "inexperience" (vii). She writes in 1999:

> Believe me, in 1984 the idea of marketing anything gay was a joke. It was absurd. I think I came up with the idea while stoned. Now it is absurd in its reality. Ironically, ***homosexuality is now defined by commodification*** and yet artists with lesbian content still aren't recognized.[12] Lila never could have predicted that one. (vii emphasis added)

Schulman's reference to commodification as the defining factor in popular images of homosexuality reiterates Donald Morton's critique of queer *desire* as capitalist *need*—queer desire as a marketable identity that perpetuates surplus value and, therefore, capitalism, exploitation, and the division of labor. Homosexual identity as commodity, in other words, represents "a secret hidden" by exchange-value; as opposed to revealing the classed social relations of private labor behind such an image-product, homosexuality as identity-commodity veils the social relations between workers "by making those relations appear as

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[12] Schulman argues in the preface to the 1999 reprint of *Girls, Visions and Everything* that there exists a "bias in the publishing industry" regarding lesbian content. Since 1989 the author has recognized "a dramatic retreat from lesbian content by lesbian writers who have succumbed to the censorious pressures of the marketplace." Schulman adds that, while some of these individuals (no names are mentioned) have "been able to make money" in this retreat, "in the long run" these writers make the "larger goal of integration on [lesbian] terms more difficult to attain." She adds, as well, that while the lesbian "community" of writers is giving up "the right to representation," "straight people" continue the practice of "mis-writing lesbian characters in false paradigms" (ix).

relations between material objects" (Marx 168-169). In other words, homosexuality as commodity eclipses the actual material realities of classed gay men and lesbians by becoming a spectacle—what Guy Debord defines as "'the existing order's uninterrupted discourse about itself, its laudatory monologue'" (qtd. in Kipnis 20). Schulman argues, for instance, that the "underground quality of lesbian cultural life" of 1980s New York City consists of material unprofitable in "the contemporary context of gay consumerism and niche marketing" (ix).

Schulman's statements that, in 1984, lesbians "were not represented at all, except in arcane code" and that, in 1999, lesbians "are blatantly misrepresented in the popular culture" (ix) reveal a space for what Kipnis refers to as "left popular culture praxis" (34). Reading lesbian texts through a hobo-sexual lens represents the practice of "the 'refunctioning' of dominant forms" (13). Kipnis maps left popular culture praxis as the appropriation of "raw materials" from dominant culture and the transformation in meaning of those same materials "to express antagonisms and resistance to dominant discourses" (13).[13] This transformation in meaning of raw material disables the denotative power of the dominant order—its grasp that prevents the multiplicity of meaning, or connotation. Of particular interest to Kipnis is the refunctioning of ontological difference into antagonistic discourse. The hobo-sexual, as well as the lesbian *as* hobo-sexual, develops such a praxis. Not only does the theorization of the hobo-sexual consist of a disarticulation and rearticulation of the American hobo, but by connecting the

[13] Kipnis specifically employs the terms "disarticulation" and "rearticulation" when referring to the appropriation of material from dominant discourse and that material's transformation of meaning within the ideological terrain (13).

lesbian to hobo-sexual practice, the lesbian of dominant discourse is both appropriated and transformed in meaning.

The idea behind Kipnis's left popular culture is not to replace one fixed meaning with another, even if that meaning represents antagonism, for resistance to dominant discourse is multiple. She uses the example of "nearly every stop sign on the north side of Chicago" having been transformed "by local women's groups" to read "STOP RAPE" as a form of left popular culture; however, STOP RAPE lasted only as long as it took for city workers "to obliterate the word RAPE with red paint" (11). Another oppositional movement employing this tactic of culture jam soon followed, however. These same stop signs were soon transformed into "STOP U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN NICARAGUA [and then] STOP U.S. SLAUGHTER IN CENTRAL AMERICA" (11). Likewise, the idea behind rearticulating the lesbian as hobo-sexual is not that I may replace lesbian as an identity-sign, but that I may trouble any hegemonic signified of lesbian, whether emanating from psycho-sexological discourse, commodity formation or even the self-reflexive rhetoric of community. Only with a reorganization of perception with regard to identity signs can Hennessy's "powerful and monstrous collective opposition of all of capitalism's disenfranchised subjects" (229) be realized.

Schulman's *Girls, Visions and Everything* actually employs Kipnis's appropriation and transformation of dominant discourse. Lila Futuransky rereads Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, only this particular time "from a different angle. . . . The trick was to identify with Jack Kerouac instead of the women he fucks along

the way" (17).[14] Despite Lila's identification with Jack—the male ego-ideal of the mobile outcaste—however, gradually "more doubts creepy crawled into her mind," and she gradually reaches the understanding that "she needed to take a trip like Jack's. But, then again, maybe it would be different for a woman. Maybe it didn't require a road at all" (137). Lila's gendered revision of the road trip initially suggests a lack of mobility where women are concerned; however, Isabel Schwartz reads aloud a newspaper article regarding Kerouac that complicates such a reading:

> "It says here that he died in his forties watching the Galloping Gourmet on TV in his mother's house. He was living with his mother and drinking beer all day long. Funny huh, how the author has nothing to do with the book. But even knowing what kind of person wrote this doesn't make its effect on me any different. I guess the road is the only image of freedom that an American can understand." (163-4)

Upon hearing this news, Lila takes "a walk" alone and contemplates "which is better, the sad truth or the fun deception?" (164). This particular scene, then, reveals a version of what Walter Benjamin has theoretically outlined as "the cult of the movie star" (231) and, in the process, accentuates Lila's urban mobility by contrast. Benjamin maps traditional art—that which gains "cult value" (225) through "aura" (221), or authenticity, and its ritualistic function—against the

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[14] John Fiske, in his essay entitled "Popular Culture," suggests that actions, such as Lila's in this passage, represent a form of consumer agency. Lila's identification with the male protagonist in *On the Road* consists of the practice Fiske labels "popular selection"—or the way in which consumers use popular cultural products for their own benefit, as opposed to passively absorbing content typically invested in dominant discourse (328).

mechanical reproduction of art, specifically photography and the film, that produces a "shriveling of the aura" (231) in the art object's ability to be reproduced, which reduces the cult value of the original. In the case of the Hollywood film, argues Benjamin, the response to the decline of aura in reproduction is an "artificial build-up of the 'personality'" or "the cult of the movie star fostered by the money of the film industry," which "preserves not the unique aura of the person but the 'spell of the personality,' the phony spell of a commodity" (231). While not a film, *On the Road* in its reproduction responds to the shrivelling of aura with the cult of the Beat poet, so to speak, particularly noted in Lila's ego-ideal identification, her ability to recite "from Jack" (37) when needing to impress a woman, as well as Isabel's desire to "be him" (163). The newspaper piece read by Isabel, however, reveals the *commodity spell* that is Jack. Crucial to note in this scene is Jack Kerouac's transformation—his *lack* of mobility—contained in his mother's house, in a chair, in his beer—juxtaposed to Lila's response to such an image, her *walking away alone*.[15] Schulman accentuates Lila's agency and mobility in this scene. Like the hobos before her, she moves alone and in such movement connects with other hobo-sexuals.

[15] In this particular passage, then, the male ego-ideal represents lack, as opposed to the female, who in psychoanalytic discourse signifies lack and the threat of castration. Schulman's production, therefore, speaks to the counter-arguments of Luce Irigaray who confronts Freud's and Lacan's psychoanalytic theories of proper psycho-sexual development as a "phallocentric dialectic" based in "specularization," a gaze that values the visible—the penis—and, in the process, relegates the female body to the realm of nothingness, or lack and absence (432-33). Irigaray destabilizes Freud's theoretical paradigm by asking, if value is in the visible, and if the boy looks first, then why not the "'envy' for the vagina?" (434).

**Hobo-Sexualing...**

Schulman's Lila Futuransky often moves alone through New York City—"the most beautiful woman she had ever known" (177)—"trying to get under the city's skin" (178). While she may briefly consider marketing lesbians like the Beats, for the most part, Lila moves like a "dyke about town" (3). *Girls, Visions and Everything* consists of her "alternately entertaining and antagonizing people she bump[s] into, trip[s] over, walk[s] with and . . . sle[eps] with" (3). While the novel concludes with Lila considering a permanent relationship with Emily Harrison—which means "making compromises, giving up things" in order to "be loved and understood," a form of "grow[ing] up" that promises "family" (177)—the final pages speak to the ambivalence Lila faces when confronted with renouncing her hobo-sexual practice. On her rooftop with Isabel, Lila claims that the permanent relationship with Emily "will never be right," that she knows "it will be an endless series of proofs that will never be enough," that her only "excuse" for settling down "is that everybody has to do this sometime in their life" (178).

Schulman writes of her hobo-sexual protagonist: having "already been through thirty-three different jobs" (117) by the time she reached the age of eighteen, Lila "always knew she was an outlaw . . . [but] she could never figure out which one" (4). While Lila's current employment never actually shifts in the novel, the consistent references to her history of having quit or having been fired from multiple jobs, as well as her theory regarding the capitalist work ethic, are certainly clear. In hobo-sexual fashion, Lila perceives her secretarial job as

"fucking boring and disruptive" to her practice of walking the East Village (48). The office items—"white-out" and "requisition forms"—represent only "time wasted and possibilities deferred" (48), so she consistently leaves work early, knowing that "by virtue of her own misbehavior" this "period" of employment "would soon be terminated" (117). Lila, however, "d[oesn't] give a shit" (117). Taking her cue from a poster on her wall that reads "'Work: A prison of measured time'" (117), she uses this same temporal containment to sabotage the disciplinary mechanism that incarcerates her. Schulman writes, "knowing it was a corrupt institution, [Lila] never felt guilty about sabotaging it in little ways":

> like pouring powdered sugar into word processors, or misfiling information on people who owed money for things they shouldn't have to pay for in the first place, like rent. She even heard about a programmer who programmed a computer to pay out dividends to all the programmers, but that was too high-tech for Lila's personal taste. (117)

While Lila defines "work" as simply "there, and then it was over, leaving her with some kind of need to do something worthwhile," she does steal "postage," "xerox paper," "pens and white-out" for her "personal use" (13). Each mention of Lila's employment, and there are very few, consists of an additional reference to her resistance to the job, most of which "had gotten boring by the second day" (117). While Lila depends on the job for sustenance, her resistance takes the form of a *conscientious objecting to* dominant forms that manage labor.

In her sabotaging practices, she erases the debts of those unable to pay and steals supplies needed to continue her work as an artist.

Additionally, regardless of Lila's recurrent sexual relationship with Emily, Schulman's hobo-sexual protagonist moves through the East Village of New York City, her sexual desires open to collisions with both women and men. Helen Hayes, for instance, reciprocates Lila's flirtatious rhetoric with some of her own: "'I've actually been considering you, too, Lila for a little cheap and meaningless sex'" (4). But the following evening Helen informs Lila that she has had "'an all-afternoon honeymoon'" with another woman and asks Lila to "'put it on hold'" because "there's still something there" (5). The reader learns, as well, that Lila "was Muriel's permanent affair," which consists of Muriel having "main lovers" who are not Lila, and Lila—"not the marrying kind"—simply having multiple affairs without any guilt (13-14). Even after recurrent sex with Emily, Lila has sex with Sal—one of the "men in Lila's life" (32), "a hard working" African-American "boozer" (30) who plays saxophone and works part-time unloading delivery trucks for the local grocer. While unspecific as to the actual sexual practices that take place, the text gestures toward another form of nonproductive sexual expenditure in this collision between bodies.

Schulman develops Lila as having "never liked fucking" in heterosexual encounters "even before her voyage into lesbos," and she presents the sexual encounter between Sal and Lila as one of "old-fashioned sweaty boy and girl stuff, easy and light with a lot of energy" (143). Additionally, however, Schulman writes that "Sal knew how to make love to a woman" (143), suggesting

that this spontaneous space of desire consists of oral sex. Lila's sexual spaces, particularly before her ambivalence regarding a permanent relationship with Emily develops, represent hobo-sexual practices that are neither fixed nor contained by heterosexual or homosexual paradigms. So, too, Sal, himself, in an earlier confrontation with Lila, states, "'I slept with a man again. That makes twice in ten years. I feel a little shy about it, but I know I like sucking cock. I guess I can tell you that" (35). While Lila self-identifies as a lesbian, and while Sal does not identify as a gay man, sexual identity or a lack thereof never eclipses the spontaneous sexual desire of these hobo-sexual characters. Schulman writes of the summer of 1984 in the East Village:

> Summer also brought new dimensions of feeling on the street, with different kinds of love and sex for each person. You saw someone and you wanted to touch them because you loved them, or because you didn't know them and they're pretty. Because they had a way of wearing an earring, or turning and smiling, or special long fingers. Your heart would just melt for that second and you'd want to kiss her breasts or suck his cock, the way Sal did. The air was murky and thick enough to hide anybody's shyness. Because, even when the shit is hitting the fan, people can still have good times. (35)

Schulman's mapping of hobo-sexual desire throughout *Girls, Visions and Everything* borders on naturalism, in that the combination of climate and its effect on the NYC street often results in an urban determinism of sexual desire. Myles's

*Chelsea Girls*, however, represents a hobo-sexual narrative less hinged to any one urban environment and, instead, accentuates a hobo-sexual flippant self-reflexivity, more sarcastic/comedic in its delivery, yet, at times, political in its wit.

A non-linear account of episodic adventures that nurture a narrative style of disjunctions, digressions, and tangents, *Chelsea Girls* reinvents American cities as hobo-sexual spaces of sporadic and spontaneous desires. Rather than the predictable humdrum of the capitalist machine, the emphasis in Myles's text is on a rhythm of unanticipated encounters in sustenance and sex. In its non-linear structure, Myles's narrative actually enhances a reading of hobo-sexual practice. *Chelsea Girls* consists of a collection of prose that in its anthologized form rejects chronology by disregarding the paradigms of linear history and travel. Readers are required to reorganize their perception—to bounce from image to image, city to city, not to mention year to year, and back again, suspending their reliance both on geographical logic and on the time-line proper. As opposed to chapters that build on each other to further the objective of plot development, Myles employs a looser adhesive of associative images that involves the reader in making connections over time and space. Readers, in other words, move with Myles's narrator who does not have the objective to conclude, but to continue in movement.

In hobo-sexual style, Myles's first-person narrative moves its reader predominantly through the back alleys, bars, and bedrooms of New England and New York City. The anthology begins with "Bath, Maine," a short story in which Myles transforms the images that are traditionally employed in the

commodification of Maine, a state whose license plate reads 'Vacationland.' The author challenges the calendar photos of the restored homes of retired sea captains that few can afford, as well as the picturesque rocky coastline used as a standard backdrop for the icon lobsterman (who is arguably more concerned about his daily sustenance than any calendar). In their place, Myles tells the unprofitable tale of temporary mill-working lesbians who go on a road trip to Augusta after swallowing much alcohol and a handful of speed. She and her lesbian posse enter a gay bar and disrupt even that apparently queer space. Myles writes:

> All the men were taking their shirts off and dancing. We got mad. We wanted to take our shirts off. So we did. Everybody thought it was great. Except for the manager and a couple of fag bartenders. Put 'em on. The men don't have to put their shirts on. Just get out. You can't be in this bar with your shirts off. Put your shirts on and get out. We did. But first we took our pants off. (12)

Needless to say, one would be hard pressed to find such images in any tourist guide. But most crucial to note is that Myles remaps the state capitol as a space defiant of legislative control. She writes against the grain of a state politics that outlaws the naked female body, as well as spontaneous desire.

While in Maine, Myles works at the monotonous job of dipping wooden frames into vats of stain, but such work never dominates the narrative. Rather than privilege work over leisure, Myles dismisses the job as simply the unfortunate means to sustenance and, in turn, pleasure. The majority of her time is spent mapping the state of Maine by way of the bars she inhabits, the brawls

she finds herself in, and the jail time she serves. But what gains space is her need for sexual pleasure. From "getting all amorous in the back seat of Judy's car with Darragh, her ex-girlfriend" to, only one page later, "happily climb[ing] right on top of Judy" in her "big bed," Myles's desire is transient (12-13). And, like any other hobo-sexual, she leaves the state of Maine "glad to be going off *on [her] own again*" (17 emphasis added).

In "Madras," set in Massachusetts, Myles's narrative reflects on a working-class education that takes the form of a job at Filene's Basement in Boston. The narrator is labelled "'a transient,'" which "sounded right to [her] because [she] had read *Grapes of Wrath*" (92). Her own pleasure, however, is found after hours in the "big plunger kisses" of Gus, who later puts her hand on his crotch during a beach party. She writes, "I liked how warm it felt, all kind of big and bulging. I actually really wanted to do it" (91). Unfortunately, the majority of sexual references situated in Massachusetts are based, like those of the female hobos before her, in domination and exchange. She spends most of her nights getting "finger fucked" or giving "handjobs" in order to get a ride to the local club because "boys had cars, girls didn't" (89). So, too, the Massachusetts landscape is haunted with a sexual danger hinged on male dominance. There are references to the gang rapes of Jane Coyne and of the eighteen-year-old narrator herself, a rape that Myles describes as "just a rhythm of many guys" (189).

But Myles's hobo-sexual adventures continue on a more autonomous and pleasurable note in New York City, where she works as a cocaine-dealing cabdriver, as a telemarketer, as a seller of sneakers, and as a waitress, to name

only a few of her jobs. Each ends with the attitude that is best summed up by her phrase: "I had to quit something, so I quit my job" (168). This flippant anti-work ethic, like that of the hobo-sexual of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, allows Myles's urban protagonist to roam the city streets, where her unrestrained desires lead to various sexual pleasures. She masturbates on a bus; fucks many a lesbian; puts her hand on a man's crotch, which "reduces him to a child" (109); as well as has sex with a married couple who were both "being unfaithful at the same time" (164).

Unlike Lila Futuransky who debates settling down with a woman "she had become responsible for" (177), Myles's narrator speaks consistently to the deconflation of love and sex. She employs what John Fiske argues is one of the tactics of popular culture that exposes culture as a process, a site of the struggle for meaning. According to Fiske, in popular culture dominant forms are perpetually reproduced, but are also exceeded. In other words, in the reproduction of dominant discourses, such as the conflation of love and sex, there exists, as well, hyperbolic or magnified representations of dominant discourse—spaces where "'the taken-for-granted' is thus disturbed" (329). Fiske argues that excessiveness, sensationalism and exaggeration consist of tactics employed in popular culture that expose "norms to questioning and criticism" (329). In the case of *Chelsea Girls*, Myles repeats and, consequently, resignifies love by, first, consistently referring to it and, secondly, attaching to it a variety of objects, both human and inanimate. Throughout the anthology, Myles applies the term love to women, such as Chris whom the narrator "loved not drinking" (13) and Robin,

whom the narrator "fell in love with . . . briefly" (69). While Myles does have sexual encounters with these women, she juxtaposes these lesbian loves with loves less traditional and more exaggerated. For instance, the narrator also "love[s] seeing a pen die" (23); she "loves [a] teevee" on which she has a ten dollar deposit (47). She also has a "love" of pills (29); a "love [of] men" because they drink seriously (49); and she "love[s]" the "little voice" that "yell[s]" her name "before she loses consciousness" (137). She also "love[s] the exquisite calm of xeroxing" (30), and as for "the smell of fried food" (on her lover) that "crawl[s] into bed" with her, well, she "love[s] it" (63). In fact, at one point in her narrative, she admits, "I only liked getting drunk and being in love" (18). Myles's rhetorical love strategy, then, deconflates love and sex and resignifies love, like desire, as an intensity, its object-choice undetermined and various.

Both Lila Futuransky and Myles's first-person narrator move in hobo-sexual fashion. Their sexual relations are as transient as their work practices. And within these hobo-sexual spaces is an emphasis on the *conscientious objecting to* dominant discourses that manage labor and sex. Complementing her transience, Lila's choice to sabotage the financial records of those who owe rent signifies her resistance to a capitalist system. And her stealing of office products for the purpose of her art dismisses the exchange value of such products while noting their use value. As well, Myles's first-person narrator mismanages the dominant discourses that conflate love and sex. She disrupts standard discourses, such as that of holy matrimony, that conflate love and sex by resignifying love as an intensity able to connect to both animate and inanimate objects. In

deconflating love and sex, however, Myles's narrator also collapses the objectification of love objects, whether human or inorganic, and draws attention to the commodification of love. In the process, she resignifies sexual desire as an intensity with various object-choice.

**Racial Economics**

Rearticulating the lesbian as hobo-sexual generates connections in American hobo history formerly denied. Not unlike their predecessor the hobo, Lila Futuransky and Myles's narrator speak to a *conscientious objecting to* the dominant discourses of sex and work that value stability, discipline and deferred gratification. Lorde's *Zami*, however, complicates the lesbian as hobo with specific references to race as a determining factor in both employment and lesbian aggregates. While both Schulman and Myles produce narrative attitudes that mock permanent employment, Lorde, an African-American, speaks to the difficulties in attaining employment for which she is qualified, simply on account of her race. Throughout the text, for instance, she is often found in "the discouraging work of job-hunting" (184). Her narrative also speaks to antagonisms to dominant discourse that are eclipsed under the canopy term lesbian. Lorde's hobo-sexual practice, however, permeates the narrative, exposing the absences of the racial, sexual and gendered Other in American hobo history.

Lorde's *Zami*, in and of itself, reads like a connective history—one of various women who come to shape the subject-author—or, more specifically,

"Zami," a connection of "women who work together as friends and lovers" (255).[16] Mapping the trajectory from her childhood in Harlem to her experiences in the lesbian bars of the 1950s, *Zami* chronicles Lorde's search for "home" (9), initiated by the tales[17] of her immigrant mother from Grenada who arrived on U.S. soil in 1924, never to return to the island of Carriacou (10).[18] Lorde writes, "Once *home* was a far way off, a place I had never been to but knew well out of my mother's mouth" (13). Gradually, however, Lorde reconfigures home as "a bridge and field of women" (255)—"women who helped give [her] substance" (255).[19]

Growing up in Harlem, Lorde learns her race in multiple forms, including a note that reads 'You Stink' that she finds in her Catholic school desk,[20] as well as in the actions of the comic store owner—a cigar-smoking "old man" whose "nasty fingers moved furtively up and down [her] body" (49) while lifting her to see the Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig comics located on a high shelf. In particular are the technologies of Jim Crow that deny her subjectivity in 1947 during her

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[16] Interesting to note is that, while Lorde calls *Zami* a "new spelling of my name," the author actually did re-spell her birth name, from Audrey to Audre. She writes, "I did not like the tail of the Y hanging down below the line in Audrey, and would always forget to put it on, which used to disturb my mother greatly" (24).

[17] Throughout her childhood Lorde hears of Grenada—"We would walk the hills of Greenville, Grenada, and when the wind blew right smell the lime trees of Carriacou, spice island off the coast. Listen to the sea drum up on Kick'em Jenny, the reef whose loud voice split the night" (13).

[18] Lorde's mother Linda lived in Carriacou, a geographical location Lorde was unable to locate on any atlas when she was a child. In a footnote, however, the author mentions that the isle of Carriacou did appear in the *Atlas of the Encyclopedia Brittannica*, but by the time she discovers this, the author is twenty-six years old (14).

[19] Lorde's concept of Zami—women who work together as friends and lovers—consists of a construction of the woman-identified-woman produced in earlier feminist discourses of the 1970s and 80s, such as that of Adrienne Rich who maps the "lesbian continuum," or the production of a political affiliation in which women could be united under the term lesbian. While Rich detaches lesbian from its distinct sexual definition, the hobo-sexual accentuates the sexual, as well as a variety of non-productive sexual practices. (Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality" 239).

[20] Upon showing this note to her teacher, Lorde is told by Sister Blanche "that Colored people did smell different from white people" (60).

graduation trip (from eighth grade) to Washington, D.C. Confronted with the *separate but equal* material reality of the Plessy decision, the Lorde family is denied the right to eat their ice cream inside a Breyer's establishment but, instead, is to be satiated with "'take out'" (70). This blatant form of American racism, from which Lorde's parents had tried to shield her, works to recontextualize the urban capitol for the narrator, at the same time that it signifies an epiphany for her, and an end to her childhood innocence. She writes:

> The waitress was white, and the counter was white, and the ice cream I never ate in Washington, D.C. that summer I left childhood was white, and the white heat and the white pavement and the white stone monuments of my first Washington summer made me sick to my stomach the whole rest of that trip and it wasn't much of a graduation present after all. (71)

Following this epiphanic moment, Lorde discovers "a new world called voluntary aloneness" (83), a comprehension of the need for self-preservation that both affects and fuels her hobo-sexual practice after Hunter High School.

Two weeks following her high school graduation, Lorde works "nights as a nurse's aid," "move[s] out" of her parents' house, and has her first recurrent sexual relationship with Peter (103). Lorde writes, "Sex seemed pretty dismal and frightening and a little demeaning, but Peter . . . Iris . . . and Jean said I'd get used to it" (105). Throughout this relationship, however, the author wonders "why it [isn't] possible to just love each other and be warm and close and let the grunting go" (105). After Peter decides to end the relationship, not unlike the female

hobos of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Lorde finds herself alone and confronted with an unwanted pregnancy—"Trapped. Something—anything—had to be done," she writes (107). Through a network of women at Beth David hospital, she locates Mrs. Muñoz, who performs Lorde's illegal abortion, a "process" that takes "about fifteen hours and cost[s] forty dollars, which was a week and a half's pay" (109). Even before such a financial cost, Lorde's financial security is tenuous at best and requires her to work "forty-four hours a week at the hospital" while also attending Hunter College "for fifteen more" (105). In times of unemployment, the author sells her blood for "five dollars" (105), uses the ten dollars a week from her scholarship to pay rent, and forces herself through "the grinding annihilation of employment agencies" (106). Lorde's experiences with these agencies, unlike those documented in white male hobo history, are tainted by the "personnel clerks" who only grin at Lorde's "presumption in applying for jobs as a medical receptionist, and part-time at that" (106). At one employment agency in particular, when Lorde announces, "'I'd like to work as a medical receptionist'" (125), Mrs. Kelly of the CRISPUS ATTUCKS CENTER replies in astonishment, "'As a what, did you say?'" (125).[21] The dialogue continues:

> "A medical receptionist, ma'am. I've worked for two doctors before in New York."
>
> "You know, dear, there's not too much choice of jobs around here for Colored people, and especially not for Negro girls." (125)

[21] Lorde specifically describes Kelly's reaction of "arched eyebrows and averted eyes" that made the author "feel like [she'd] just belched without covering [her] mouth" (125).

Therefore, regardless of her friend Joan's desire to quit her job and become "a bum for a while" (217), Lorde understands all too well that this is not an option for the author, that "race and recession were still realities" standing between an African-American woman and a job (187). Lorde, instead, "envie[s]" Joan this "freedom of choice" (217) and remarks that Joan's choice is "what being white and knowing how to type meant" (217). Lorde does speak to her resistance on the job, however. "My only weapon was retreat" (189), Lorde states about her employment as a receptionist under the tyrannical rule of Mrs. Goodrich. Like Schulman's Lila Futuransky who writes poems during work hours, Lorde catches "mini-sleeps" during which she types "snatches of poems and nonsense phrases" in the middle of the "formal sentences" of professional letters (189). This practice leads to Mrs. Goodrich's perusal of "appalling sentences" (189) and before long Lorde's dismissal.[22]

In the years that follow, Lorde moves into another apartment in NYC, fails her courses in German and Trigonometry, becomes "beside [herself] with sexual frustration" and decides she will "definitely . . . have an affair with a woman" (119). This objective is met only once she leaves New York City for factory work in Stamford, Connecticut. In Stamford, Lorde works, first, at a ribbon factory, a job that is "unbelievably boring" (123). She learns that race determines her inability to join the union, which, after three weeks of employment is standard for white workers and increases their wages from "ninety cents an hour" to "the

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[22] Robin D.G. Kelley notes that resistant actions, like those of Lorde's on the job, represent "inventive ways to compensate" for the way raced working subjects are treated in employment. Kelley's scholarship focuses on the daily lives of African-American working people and chronicles the "inventive and diverse struggles waged by black workers during the twentieth century" (1-4).

standard minimum wage"—one dollar and fifteen cents (123). In this respect "Black workers" of unskilled labor, or what Lorde refers to as work "not hard to learn" (123), do not have the same agency in choosing the temporality of their work as do white women. Unlike Lila and Myles' narrator, Lorde's temporary employment is decided *for* her; racism materializes in the combination of her "paycheck and no job" (123) upon the end of her third week of employment. In this respect, Lorde's narrative speaks not to the choice of temporary work noted in the hobo-sexual, but to the actual denial of such agency. Also, as opposed to the prostitute in hobo history who is deemed the potential threat to hobo mobility, American racism is exposed in Lorde's text as that which manages hobo-sexual desire.

Lorde does, however, locate another form of employment at Keystone Electronics. And "running a commercial X-ray machine" (125) aids in her sexual mobility, but certainly at a cost. She writes of her job, "Nobody mentioned that carbon tet destroys the liver and causes cancer of the kidneys" (126). According to Lorde, "the second it took" to flip down the X-ray hood in the process of reading crystals "was often the difference of being yelled at for being too slow," but "nobody mentioned that the X-ray machines, when used unshielded, delivered doses of constant low radiation far in excess of what was considered safe even in those days" (126-127). For an African-American woman in search of employment, the crucial and immediate factor is that "Keystone Electronics hired Black women and didn't fire them after three weeks. [They] even got to join the union" (126).

Inherent in reading Lorde's text as a connection in hobo-sexual history is an emphasis on race. As opposed to reading these texts as lesbian, a hobo-sexual connection requires that race be considered, particularly because of its influence in the management of labor. Lorde's charting of her employment in Stamford does not speak directly to her sexuality, but to her race as it functions in her search for a job. Race, then, affects Lorde's hobo-sexual kinetics; dominant discourses that manage both race and labor limit her mobility. While the lack of jobs available in unskilled labor affects all hobo-sexuals, Lorde's situation does not speak to downsizing or cut backs. Denied access to minimum wage, the union, and employment in a doctor's office, Lorde is contained at the level of the body. She is allowed employment deemed suitable only *for Negro girls*—labor known to be hazardous to the same body that contains her. Despite these obstacles, however, Lorde's hobo-sexual kinetics persist.

It is during her time in Stamford that Lorde experiences her "open desire" (139) in a sexual relationship with Ginger, an African-American co-worker at Keystone Electronics, that, in turn, leads to the author's resignification of *home*. Lorde writes of her initial sexual space with Ginger, "I never questioned where my knowledge of her body and her need came from. Loving Ginger that night was like coming home to a joy I was meant for" (139). Lorde's sexual desire for Ginger, however, does not remain fixed, for soon after the author is "seized with such a desire to go to Mexico" (147). Returning to New York City after being fired from the Keystone company, Lorde decides to *make a stake* in order to travel to Mexico. She eventually lands a job as a "clinic clerk" (147) at a health

center and allows her sexual desires to manifest themselves in a sexual relationship with another woman. The author represents "making love" to Bea as a form of "home," but notes that, for her partner, sex registered only as "theoretical satisfaction" (150-151). Regardless of this sexual encounter that renders Bea co-dependent, Lorde leaves for Mexico alone and finds there another element of *home*. In her "moving through street after street" of Mexico City, she "break[s] [her] life-long habit of looking down at [her] feet" and feels "visible," never knowing she had "lacked it" (156). "The streets," writes Lorde, "were filled with people with brown faces," which "had a profound and exhilarating effect upon me" (154). In Mexico, Lorde has an affair with Eudora, an alcoholic expatriate who has had radical surgery for breast cancer, but their sexual relationship "only happen[s] three times" (173) and ends with Eudora's relocating to "the District" (175) and Lorde's departure for New York City after news of the Supreme Court decision to desegregate public education.

Lorde's return to New York City consists predominantly in her mapping of lesbian aggregates, particularly those of the bar scene. The narrative fluctuates dialectically between the strength of lesbian women as a whole and the lack of individual difference sanctioned in such aggregates. Within lesbian communal spaces, the dismissal of Lorde's racial difference renders the author more asocial than communal. Lorde, with regard to race and lesbian aggregates, reverts, predominantly, to an internal dialogue that understands race as crucial in even lesbian spaces. While Lorde comprehends that she is both "gay and Black" (180), she discovers that self-referencing her race in lesbian aggregates signifies "that

[she] had breached some sacred bond of gayness," a bond she "always knew was not sufficient" for her (181). In fact, during her sexual relationship with Muriel, a white woman, Lorde is told by her lover that, as lesbians, they are "'all niggers,'" a statement Lorde considers "wishful thinking based on little fact; the ways in which it was true languished in the shadow of those many ways in which it would always be false" (203). Lorde, then, polices her references to her own race. She shares this specific racial "battle and . . . strength" (203) with her only African-American lesbian friend, Felicia. In these scenes, Lorde maps the tensions that arise in aggregates defined solely by sexuality. In such spaces, the African-American lesbian's race is reduced to a secondary status or erased entirely.

Lorde's references to her being an outsider in the midst of lesbian aggregates speaks to a dimension of lesbian communal spaces treated far more casually by Schulman. While *Girls, Visions and Everything* contains African-American characters, these same characters are secondary to Lila Futuransky and speak predominantly of racial discrimination as a dominant discourse of knowledge, as opposed to one that affects female aggregates. Lacy, for instance, an African-American poet, speaks against the publishers who market her as though she is the next Lorraine Hansberry. She tells Lila that her frustration comes from marketers who "have to compare a Black woman to a Black woman, . . . then they compare a poet to a playwright. The guys in marketing probably looked through a book called *Great Negroes* and the only woman in it was Lorraine Hansberry" (54). This reference, of course, speaks back to the commodification of identity, racial identity. While Lacy is not a lesbian

character, her racial identity is revealed as commodified in marketing schemes. Additionally, Schulman produces the character of Vicki, a black lesbian who says to Lila, after discovering she has never slept with a black woman, "'You white women claim to support our movement, but you won't let a woman of color into your bed'" (94). Lila only considers Vicki's statement for a short paragraph, however, and then figures "so fucking what?" which ends the introspective gaze.

In reading the lesbian as hobo-sexual, obviously *race matters*. Lorde's narrative represents the various differences resulting in a collision between class and sexuality not necessarily accounted for in either Schulman's *Girls, Visions and Everything* or in Myles's *Chelsea Girls*, both of which feature white lesbian protagonists. Unlike the African-American presence denied for the most part in American hobo mythology, a connective hobo-sexual history *requires* a consideration of race, in that employment, and more specifically sporadic and temporary work practices, cannot be fully comprehended without a consideration of the discourses of racial inequality that manage those practices. So, too, the canopy term lesbian does not necessarily account for the multiple antagonistic discourses, including those of classed and raced subjects, contained under such a generalized term.

**A Twentieth-Century Hobohemia**

By way of hobo-sexual practice, these lesbian texts also recontextualize the American city as a hobohemia in the 1950s, 80s, and 90s. Each reveals the antagonistic sex and labor practices veiled behind the commodity America that

promises *life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*[23] while also exposing the urban locales unassimilable in the American dream. So, too, while the hobo jungles of wilderness and relative safety may no longer exist, hobo practices, such as story-telling, rag picking and the making of a mulligan, certainly persevere.

In *Zami*, for instance, Lorde cooks up a New Year's mulligan breakfast for her lesbian friends. She mixes the "last two eggs" into "the leftover Chinese food" and adds a "drizzle of the foo yong gravy and some powdered milk"—a "concoction" that feeds several (194). Additionally, Lorde "wander[s] the streets of the Lower East Side" on weekend mornings to find the "wonders that the unimaginative ha[ve] discarded" (202). In her cataloging of "scavenged" items, she lists "wooden radio cabinets," "dresser drawers," "brass lamps and rococo fixtures" and an "old dentist's chair with only one arm support missing" (202). Like the hobos and tramps before her who whittled and carved discarded wood, Lorde looks to these items as "future possibilities" (202)—the dresser drawers, along with a few found bricks, for instance, make for bookcase shelves. In *Chelsea Girls*, Myles's first-person narrator tells a tale set in lower New England, consisting of an earlier history of growing up in the Cambridge area. The daughter of an alcoholic mail carrier who services Harvard Yard, Myles's first-person narrator offers a revised version of an Ivy League education. "The students at Harvard were rich," she states. "They were always leaving and selling

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[23] Jack Solomon notes that the American dream has "two faces: the one communally egalitarian and the other competitively elitist." According to Solomon, this contradiction is "no accident," but actually structures social relations among U.S. citizens. American myths of equality that celebrate "the virtues of mom, apple pie, and the girl and boy next door" also lure U.S. consumers "to achieve social distinction," which rather than foster satisfaction "breeds desire, a longing for a greater part of the pie" (48).

things" (208-09). What then follows is a cataloguing of the results of rag-picking adventures. From a hi-fi system and a collection of records to her father's London Fog and her own drawing pad complete with charcoal pencils, the privileged excesses of Harvard students function, on the one hand, as the detritus of a privileged class while, on the other, as the unexpected treasures of the working poor.

Hobo-sexual movement through the city, as well, insists on a reorganization of perception that requires readers to confront a far less deodorized version of the urban landscape than promoted in the commodification of New York City. Lila, for instance, while walking the Eastside streets, notices "Tony, nodding out in a doorway. . . . his clothes were filthy. . . . There he was, sitting in the garbage and piss, oblivious. He was drooling all over his pants" (173). So, too, Lorde, in her working temporarily at a hospital, speaks of the moments during which she had witnessed "the results of botched abortions on the bloody gurneys lining the hallways outside the emergency room" (107). Additionally, the imagined safety found in homogeneity is replaced by ethnic, racial and religious diversity. Because Lila consistently needs to walk the city, she reveals various differences, weaving through a working-class heterogeneity. Lila passes through the "Polish butcher and the Korean fruit stands and the Chinese take-out and the Arab deli and the Greek coffee shop and the East Asian newsstand and the Jewish bakery"—what she calls the "everyday" "beauty of the Lower Eastside" (97). And back at Filene's Basement, transient Myles arrives at work hung-over, moving from counter to counter as needed and, in the process, uncovers the

heterogeneous lot who frequent the store known nationwide for its marked-down, name-brand items. Her surroundings include her fellow transients, such as "the black stock clerks from Roxbury, the white Irish high school girls, the Jewish women with beehives and big glasses and quite a few concentration camp tattoos on their arms" (92). These co-workers are juxtaposed to the shoppers:

> Mostly female, mostly white, the black shoppers looked like young beautiful models . . . [But] there was also a significant population of gypsies and drag queens who loved to try on floor length gowns. Both of these were said to be major thieves, but mostly the detectives just liked to watch them, I think. (93)

The setting of Filene's Basement consists of a dense transfer point of power relations. On the one hand, it is the working class of ethnic, race, and religious diversity that services the homogeneous white female shopper. Even *the black shoppers* are developed by the simile of the model that suggests marketable like-whiteness. Additionally, it is the bodies of transient desires and work practices, both the Gypsies and drag queens, that are policed most carefully. However, Filene's Basement also suggests a space where the white, or white-like, female shopper must confront drag queens and Gypsies in her pursuit to accumulate bourgeois merchandise at more affordable rates, and where the gaze of the law is reconsidered the tool of a pleasurable fear.

*Girls, Visions and Everything* also contains several references to spaces managed, or organized by, dominant culture and the hobo-sexual resistance to these. Lila, for instance, moves through the gentrification of Avenues A and B—

"the crawling invasion" that had replaced the "Good Humor man" with "tofutti-selling teenaged boys" and the "mom and pop soda fountains" with "imported ices"—to arrive at "little patches" of "marigolds and tomato plants" that constitute the "garden" of Sally and Lacy (19-20). Not unlike the hobo jungles where tramps and hobos gathered in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the garden consists of a place stimulated by "hours" of "telling tall tales" (20). In the midst of such an informal aggregate who drink wine from paper cups, Sally relates her confrontation with a representative from New York City's Green Apple Program who, earlier in the week, had handed Sally "'a little plaque of a green apple'" as an award for Sally's and Lacy's garden. She "'then told [them] she was [their] official organizer'" (21). Lacy adds that the organizer returned only a few days later to demand that Lacy's and Sally's garden "had to be square"; in fact, "all gardens had to be square" (21). And as is the standard practice of "'the bureaucratic unimagination,'" notes Sally, a meeting is then held, during which Sally allegedly screamed "'ONLY FASCISTS MAKE PEOPLE HAVE SQUARE GARDENS,'" followed by Lacy's statement to the committee—"'FUCK THE PLAN'" (20). After the laughs, Schulman writes that the group "got quiet" and "sat back, satisfied at having told a good story" (20). The practice of story telling, then, acts as a social adhesive for these female aggregates. And, like the hobo tall-tale, these narratives make a hero out of the storyteller, a hero engendered by her confrontation with dominant forms of organization.

Some stories of resistance, however, speak to the violence the hobo-sexual confronts. Both Schulman and Myles, for instance, make space for the rape victim in their narratives. While already mentioned is Myles' reference to two gang rapes in Massachusetts, Emily, in Schulman's *Girls, Visions and Everything*, also speaks to her history of having been raped. She tells Lila, for instance, "'Since I was raped, I can't stand anything inside me at all'" (93). Likewise, Lorde refers to a "situation" (182) with a "Black brother" that she "couldn't handle physically—in other words, the bastard was stronger than [she] was" (181). She refers to this experience—even though she "got out of being raped" but was, indeed, "mauled"—as "an instantaneous consciousness-raiser" (182). And in Mexico City, Lorde acts on what she hears, that "single women do not go out alone after dark" (155). References to institutional violence register as well in hobohemia. In particular is Lorde's experience with Muriel, a lesbian who becomes Lorde's lover after having been disciplined by "electro-shock" treatments (240). Of Muriel, Lorde writes, she "was slowly crawling out from under the basket of shock treatments she had been thrust into" (184). While the author does not expand upon the specific reasons for Muriel's electric-therapy, it is more than probable that such a practice had been used to manage Muriel's lesbianism, connecting her to the hypertrophied clitoris and its cure noted in sexology discourses mapped earlier in the century.

Confronting these spaces of violence, the hobo-sexual narrative works to appropriate and transform the meanings associated with these spaces. It is Myles, for instance, who renders the rape victim a hero. Regarding Jayne Coyne who

had been gang raped, Myles's narrator states, "I fell in love with Jane. . . . I loved her because she had been raped and because she was tough" (142). Granted, Myles's rhetorical love strategy, by way of constant repetition, leads to the deconflation of love and sex, but in this case it also works to resignify the victim as hero. Like London's hobo/tramp productions, the victim has agency in practicing *a conscientious objecting to* dominant discourse. Rearticulated by Myles, Jayne Coyne, in her persistence, signifies the conscientious objecting to the heterosexual contract that guarantees male dominance over the female body as mapped by Wittig. In *Zami*, as well, Lorde resignifies The Women's House of Detention that stands "right smack in the middle of the Village" (206). While she admits that the penal institution acts as a reminder of "punishment," it is also revised as "a defiant pocket of female resistance, ever-present as a reminder of possibility"—"like one up for our side" (206), writes Lorde.

In resignifying the lower East side as hobohemia, the lesbian bar becomes central as a resistant space in these narratives, despite its history of being managed by profit-seekers.[24] As Joan Nestle states, lesbian bars in the 1950s, such as The Sea Colony, and the lesbian clientele who frequented them were "surrounded by the nets of the society that hated [lesbians] and yet wanted [their] money" (37). Despite the "Mafia nets, clean-up New York nets [and] vice squad nets" (37), Nestle accentuates the forms of resistance that lesbian desire took in the 1950s. Particularly notable is what Nestle refers to as "the most searing reminder of our colonized world" (38), the bathroom line. She writes:

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[24] For an extended treatment of the lesbian bar scene and its oral history in Buffalo, see Elizabeth Lapovksy Kennedy's and Madeline D. Davis's *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: the History of a Lesbian Community* (1993).

> Because we were labelled deviants, our bathroom habits had to be watched. Only one woman at a time was allowed into the toilet because we could not be trusted. Thus the toilet line was born, a twisting horizon of Lesbian women waiting for permission to urinate, to shit. . . . Guarding the entrance to the toilet was a short, square, handsome butch woman, the same every night, whose job it was to twist around her hand our allotted amount of toilet paper. (38)

Confronted with this surveillance and discipline, Nestle and her fellow lesbians develop "a line act" in the midst of their colonization. According to Nestle, lesbians "joked . . . cruised . . . commented on the length of time . . . it took" each other to release her bodily waste (39). In other words they "played" (39) with such a space. And, in the process, the bathroom line in lesbian bars represents both "the pain" and "the glory" (38) of lesbian resistance for Nestle.

In *Zami*, Lorde, likewise, frequents The Sea Colony, as well as various other lesbian bars in the 1950s, despite her dislike for liquor. Her references to the colonization of such places, however, speaks to racial discrimination as opposed to the lesbian surveillance mapped by Nestle. At the Bagatelle, for instance, Lorde is consistently asked to produce ID, despite the fact that she is the oldest in her lesbian posse about to enter the bar. While the narrator knows she is disciplined in this manner because of her race, in that "'you can never tell with Colored people,'" members of her lesbian aggregate refuse to entertain such a

notion because of their uncritical assumption that "gay people weren't racists. After all, didn't they know what it was like to be oppressed?" (180).

Lorde, however, while discriminated against, does occupy lesbian bars throughout her narrative and, in doing so, reveals the heterogeneity that congregates under the sign lesbian. Besides Lorde's white working-class posse, there is Diane, "fat, and Black, and beautiful . . . before it became fashionable" (177); the Black women performing "the heavy role" of butch because the "racist distortions of beauty" forbid them to be "femme"; and the femmes, represented by the white "well-heeled, superbly dressed . . . high-steppers" (224). Additionally, bi-sexuals, or "AC/DC" types, frequent the clubs, as well as "Ky-Ky"s—or "gay girls who slept with johns for money" (178). Lorde's mapping of the lesbian bar scene, then, exposes a variety of class, performance and non-productive sexual practice. Her representations of lesbian bars speak to the hobo-sexual connection with bi-sexuality and prostitution outlined by Bertha Thompson in her data regarding female transients of the early-twentieth century. These particular lesbian bars and their inhabitants, despite the practice of Othering the AC/DC and Ky-Ky, which according to Lorde are labels used to "disparage" (178) such difference, signify a hobo-sexual space.

**In Conclusion?...**

Resignification—the practice of repeating and revising—permeates these lesbian narratives in their confrontation with what Gil Valentine refers to as "the

heterosexual street" (146), or the barrage of heterosexual[25] images that saturate the everyday perception of sexual Others.[26] In rearticulating the urban environment through hobo-sexual practices, these texts disrupt the heterosexual city, revealing it as an assumed space of homogenous sexual practice. But these narratives also remap the city by reorganizing perception; the reader's gaze is focused on the economic consequences of hobo-sexual practices. Such a shift in perception requires readers to confront what Kipnis calls the *complete commodification of the image*—the diversion of the public gaze from the material labor relations between citizens. These texts appropriate the traditional images of New York City developed for its commodification, and remap the urban space as a hobohemia of undesirables who serve a negative function within capitalism.

My understanding of these lesbian texts as hobo-sexual consists of a resignifying practice as well. By insisting on a reorganization of perception in reading these texts, the identity sign lesbian is transformed into a connection in hobo-sexual history, or a site of sporadic work and sex practices. These texts speak to the dynamics of the *outlawed need* of wanderlust capable of revealing both the homosexual and female pleasure formerly erased by the homosocial networks inherent in a traditional American hobo history. Rather than a

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[25] Here I speak specifically to the "institution of heterosexuality," what Christine Overall in "Heterosexuality and Feminist Theory" defines as "the systematized set of social standards, customs, and expected practices which both regulate and restrict romantic and sexual relationships" (262).

[26] Valentine employs Butler's argument regarding gender as the repetitive performance of the body. Valentine extends this gender performance as part of the performance inherent in heterosexuality. The "heterosexing of space" as a "performative act naturalized through repetition and regulation" permeates everyday surroundings. Heterosexing space takes many forms, including "heterosexual couples kissing and holding hands" as they walk down streets, "advertisements and window displays" that present the nuclear family as "contented," as well as "heterosexualized conversations" and music with lyrics "articulating heterosexual desires" (146).

reappropriation—a taking back—however, I read these texts as representative of an appropriating and transforming of the American hobo into the hobo-sexual, a form of left popular culture praxis. In reartculating the lesbian as hobo-sexual, considerations of class and race are transformed from ontological difference to antagonistic discourses. By way of a hobo-sexual lens, the lesbian in these particular texts connects to the American hobo, the tramp, the prostitute, the leased convict, the fairy, the castrated black male body, and the raced, gendered and classed bodies complete with hypertrophied clitorises.

My intention is not to gather or group subjects of transient sex and work practices into a novel homogeneity that erases their differences. Rather, I have constructed the hobo-sexual as a site in connective history, a narrative able to articulate difference in its very consideration of relations. Embodied in the hobo-sexual are the *outlawed needs* of human potential that are, according to Rosemary Hennessy, unassimilable under capitalism. Transient work and sex practices are outlawed "because they cannot be brought back into capitalism without abolishing the very terms of the extraction of surplus value" (228). Instead, capitalism assigns hobo-sexual practice to the realm of the working poor and, in the process, manipulates the "basic human needs for food, housing, health care, and also for love and affection, education, leisure time" (228) by producing a surplus labor class able to discipline such potential democratic forms as unions. For as long as there is a transient surplus labor force, there exists a threat to job security and the alleged right to renegotiate wages and benefits in the realm of unskilled labor. Rather than recognize the various needs of human potential, capitalism produces a

narrative of illegitimate desires and the consequences of such *poor* choices. And it employs such a production as a disciplinary mechanism—a threat for the future—that perpetuates the anti-hobo-sexual practice of accumulation. Walking, riding, and writing against this ideology is the hobo-sexual who practices what Georges Bataille asks: "If I am no longer concerned about 'what will be' but about 'what is,' what reason do I have to keep anything in reserve?" (*Accursed* 58).

## Conclusion

*The American Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History in Material Queer Culture*, then, redeploys queer as temporal practices of non-productive expenditure and, in the process, locates what I term the hobo-sexual at the juncture of nineteenth-century discursive productions of labor and sexuality. I develop the hobo-sexual, in other words, at the intersection of both not-for-profit sex and work practices, or at the crossroads of a queer cultural materialism. Influenced by both feminist materialism and poststructuralism, my formulation of the hobo-sexual extends the recurrent metaphor of the nomad in French poststructuralist theory—a metaphor that promotes anti-Oedipal desire as resistant to capitalist grand narratives that value fixity—but, as well, this project charts the material consequences of such practices of desire and resistance. In mapping the hobo-sexual from its intersection in discursive productions of labor and desire, I enable a connective history of *classed* queer practice, rather than one based solely on identity politics.

My research shows a prevalence of transient sexual practice, both heterosexual and homosexual, among American hobos of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Yet these same sexual practices are consistently eclipsed in social and medical discourses by a national emphasis on reforming the hobo's pathological desire to wander, as opposed to remaining fixed, in employment. My work on the hobo-sexual foregrounds the hobo's agency and transience in sex and work, both of which, in bourgeois discourse, have been dismissed as simply degenerative. The hobo-sexual, likewise, disrupts

assumptive discourses of the American hobo as white and male. I have argued that the carceral continuum of Jim Crow disciplined much of the African-American male laborer's transience and agency, while the term prostitute obscured the hobo lifestyle of sisters of the road.

I have taken seriously Caren Kaplan's argument that poststructural metaphors, such as the nomad, represent the "theoretical tourism" (88) of "'high modernists'" (89) who privilege "language experimentation" (89) while occluding their own investment in the colonization of such metaphors. While mapping the hobo-sexual, I have concentrated on both the discursive technologies inherent in the production of the American hobo and the material consequences of hobo practices in American history. But in outlining hobo-sexual history, I have also appropriated specifically the hobo of agency, or the agent of *conscientious objecting to*, as opposed to the poor and working-class citizens—or Jack London's *average beasts in the social pit*—whose needs extend beyond themselves to dependents and whose mobility is thwarted by such responsibilities.[1] Therefore, in Kaplan's argument regarding poststructural reterritorialization, the hobo of *resistant practicing*, at first glance, may very well be read superficially as yet another of poststructuralism's "romantic figures" (90); however, in focusing on the dominant discourses of labor that managed the hobo, my project works to expose such discourses as unstable, colonizing and exclusive and, in turn, to disarticulate the hobo within them.

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[1] In any copy of the *Hobo News*, for instance, one may read announcements submitted by women in search of their husbands who have left them and often their children behind.

In the past few years of researching, thinking and writing about this project, I have noticed that the hobo has been sent back to work, so to speak, in the twenty-first century. In popular culture, hobo representation has made its way into my living room particularly by way of television advertising. I recall the extratextual reference[2] to the hobo employed in a Serta commercial, for instance, during which the company's recognizable counting sheep—unemployed because of the absolute comfort Serta mattresses promise their owners—share a moving boxcar with a lone hobo who claims he, too, could use a Serta mattress. Likewise, the Lincoln commercial that differentiates between *those who travel and those who travel well* initially claimed *wanderlust* as the motivating factor behind purchasing desire. I have since noticed, however, that the reference to wanderlust has been dropped from the Lincoln commercial's narrative. Perhaps marketers were informed that those who allegedly suffered from the pathological desire actually did not travel well at all. Regardless, what is crucial to note is that these extratextual references to the hobo—these media representations—employ the romanticization of the hobo of which Kaplan refers. Not only do they represent the "privileging of solitude" (90), but the "celebration of . . . open spaces" (90), which, according to Kaplan, correspond to the "mythologized elements of migration" (90) employed in the poststructuralist use of the nomad as metaphor. Capitalism uses the mythology of the American hobo—the rugged individual of Manifest Destiny—as a marketing device that either dismisses the material histories of hobos as comical, not unlike the clown figure, or

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[2] Mimi White, in "Ideological Analysis and Television," defines extratextual references as those that refer to discourses produced outside of television programming that are employed in television productions.

commodifies the image of the new frontier in the form of vehicles few can afford. These commercials also testify to the public viewer's *recognition* of the myth of the American hobo—a recognition relied upon by marketers in their pursuit of the management of desire and consumption. Even in the twenty-first century, then, capitalism continues to exploit and derive surplus value from the American hobo, but now through the complete commodification of his image.

Following Kipnis's mapping of a left popular culture praxis, I have appropriated this commodified image of the American hobo—taking it from the dominant discourse of niche marketing, dearticulating it by exposing its historical materialism, as well as charting its transient sexual practices—and, in the process, I have rearticulated its meaning. What Kipnis refers to as the transformation of meaning of raw material actually speaks to and relies upon the dominant discourses already invested in an object; in other words, rearticulation is dependent upon dearticulation. In the case of the American hobo, for instance, the mythology of such an historical figure acts as the dominant discourse into which consumers have been interpellated, signified by marketing schemes in the twenty-first century that choose the hobo as an associative image of comical unemployment and/or frontier mobility. In appropriating this romanticized image, I have dearticulated its mythology by mapping a complex discursive history of the American hobo, particularly noting the nineteenth-century bourgeois rearticulation of the hobo as tramp—a discursive production of the lazy and licentious denizen that thwarted national progress—a discourse that materialized in the clubbing, parading and whipping of such an American citizen,

a figure exploited during the 1930s to justify massive unemployment and in the twenty-first century to sell Serta mattresses and Lincoln vehicles.

The hobo-sexual—my rearticulation of the American hobo—disrupts the mythologizing of such an historical figure, but this transformation in meaning does not *replace* American hobo mythology. Instead, this rearticulation depends upon such a mythology as a place of intervention and maps onto it an antagonistic discourse that problematizes the deodorized version of the hobo used in capitalist marketing schemes. The hobo-sexual as antagonistic discourse, as well, enables historical connections in not-for-profit sex and labor practices by exposing dominant discourse as a managing device of desires and needs unassimilable within capitalism. As an antagonistic discourse, the hobo-sexual exposes image representation as controlled predominantly by capitalists in that resources determine much of the dissemination of dominant discourse, but the hobo-sexual also speaks to this capitalist hegemony as a shifting terrain of ideologies—unstable and, therefore, in need of perpetual repetition.

As a project in what John Fiske deems the field of cultural studies, *The American Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History in Material Queer Culture* recognizes the capitalist regime that manages the production of discursive representations and their material manifestations, but the project also accentuates agency in the consumption of these. First, the hobo-sexual exposes the pervasive image of the American hobo as a commodity fetish; capitalist representations of the hobo veil the exploited material histories of work and sex of such a citizen. But the hobo-sexual also speaks to the *conscientious objecting to* these managed

representations by subjects of hobo-sexual practice, which is why I have particularly concentrated on the agent of *resistant practicing* in hobo history when mapping the hobo-sexual.

Throughout the production of this project, I have imagined the hobo-sexual as representative of a queer cultural materialist critique—a dense site of power relations with the inherent ability to expose the management of labor and sexuality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In reading particular lesbian texts published in the twentieth century through a hobo-sexual lens in chapter four, I have connected the nineteenth-century American hobo with the lesbian—a connection in hobo-sexual practice as opposed to identity politics. I chose the lesbian particularly because she confronts both misogyny and homophobia—the management of homosocial networks that privilege male-male relations. Granted, the fear of male homosexuality predominantly manages the homosocial, but in tandem with misogyny. Also, male same-sex desire has been noted as part of hobo aggregates by Nels Anderson, and hobos have been noted as part of gay subcultures by George Chauncey, but neither historian locates male homosexual practice as disruptive to either bachelor subculture. The lesbian, however, is capable not only of connecting in hobo-sexual practice, but in doing so of exposing the homosociality inherent in both national and hobo traditions. In appropriating the lesbian and rearticulating her as hobo-sexual, however, I also expose the label of lesbian as a generalized identity sign that speaks neither to embodied sexual practices nor to the economic realities of subjects collected under such a sign.

In other words, I have not designed the hobo-sexual as a utopia, nor as a celebratory site for lesbian subjectivity. Instead, I have mapped hobo-sexual practice as queer in that it is temporally bound and spontaneous, and in its temporality and spontaneity it challenges dominant discourses of sexuality, including both the fixed instinct and the hermaphordism of the soul produced by sexologists and outlined by Michel Foucault. But because it consists of an intersection of labor and sex, the hobo-sexual—unlike the reappropriation of queer by gay, lesbian, and bi identities—requires a consideration of class in its employment. In this respect, my redeployment of queer as nonproductive expenditure extends queer beyond a solely sexual significance—as the Other of heterosexual practice—to include transient work practices. My redeployment, in other words, has required an appropriating of queer as a collection of sexual identities and its rearticulation as temporal practice.

In mapping the discourses that structured sexuality and labor in the nineteenth century, I have relied heavily on *cultural texts* as opposed to what some may consider *literature*. While the project includes a close reading of hobo sketches, a novel, autobiography and an anthology of short stories, the particular angle employed in such a reading is generated by a hobo-sexual approach—the product of newspaper clippings, medical, sociological and sexological discourses, as well as contemporary theoretical concerns. The priority throughout this project has been to map the hobo-sexual by way of cultural history in order that it represent soundly the intersection of not-for-profit sex and work practices;

therefore, these cultural texts, rather than canonical and/or non-canonical literature, direct the project.

In mapping this intersection, this project represents a bricolage of various theoretical materials that have influenced my reading practice over the past few years. As this project suggests, my work largely considers historical materialism—the dynamics of class struggle and how economic climates affect discursive productions and representations. Rosemary Hennessy's scholarship has enabled my understanding that discursive productions are political, and in addition her work has laid bare the technologies that have managed and continue to organize sensation and affect. As she outlines in *Profit and Pleasure*, dominant discourse has organized desire to serve capitalism; those desires deemed unassimilable, therefore, are devalued and deemed superfluous and/or aberrant in such a paradigm. My comprehension of the dialectic between representation and reality is further extended by Judith Halberstam's mapping of monstrosity. Her theorization of the monster as a meaning machine—an embodiment that signifies multiple differences that threaten national economic agendas—has offered me a paradigm through which I comprehend the historical discursive shift in representations of the hobo as tramp and the homosexual as commodity. Halberstam's work, then, complements my understanding of Judith Butler's argument that the multiple meanings inherent in identity signs cannot be managed by the self-identified, which, in turn, connects with Hennessy's formulation of the disidentified subject who is open to connections beyond the fixed and declarative *I am*.

My work on the hobo-sexual also largely incorporates Foucault's mapping of the production of sexuality, from its bourgeois hegemonic center to its deployment into the exploited classes. So, too, I have employed his assertion that power produces its own resistance by concentrating on the *resistant desiring* and *conscientious objecting to* of the hobo-sexual. But while I do understand power to be dynamic and not necessarily always located at the apex of hierarchical structures of class, I maintain an economic determinism in the last instance, not unlike Althusser. My insistence on mapping sexuality with a consideration of class, however, does not deter me from employing poststructural constructions of desire. In producing the hobo-sexual, in other words, I have been influenced by the same metaphorical romances that Kaplan criticizes. The nomad of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, for instance, offers me a way of imagining desire unstructured by the paradigms that have organized it since the nineteenth century, particularly the discourses of gender performance that manage the heterosexual-homosexual binary.

Ever since having read Kath Weston's article on gay migrations to urban centers, however, I have always questioned the nomad as an appropriate figure in my own formulation of queer desire. Even before reading Butler, who basically gave me the permission to redeploy queer, my understanding of gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual kinetics never seemed very nomadic. The majority of homosexual subjects interviewed by Weston, for instance, moved to urban centers alone, not in collectives as the metaphor of the nomad suggests. Rather than settle with the

figure of the nomad, then, I began researching the American hobo. The result of that research is my theorization of the hobo-sexual, not really a figure at all.

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